



THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

March 2023 Volume 43 Issue 3

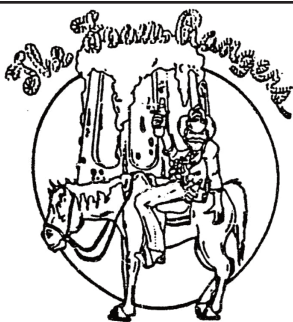


March 18th
Bad Astronaut Brewing
1519 Fulton St.
77009

This Month's Styles:
Low ABV Brews - Cream
Kolsch, Blonde, APA, etc

In This Issue

Next Up!	1
Out (of) the Wazoo	1
Club Information	2
From the Editor	2
About Last Month	3
Session Beers	4 - 5
FeBrewary Pictures	6 - 7
Club Calendar	8
Pay Your Dues!	8



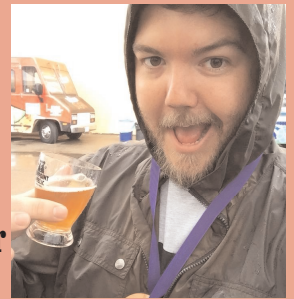
Next Up! - Bad Astronaut



Out (of) The Wazoo

Greetings Rangers!

Another month is upon us and spring is heating up. The thoughts of a helles, pilsner and kolsch are on my mind as we move into the warmer months here in the South. (Sorry it's still cold up in Philly, Scott) Its time to start brewing refreshing crisp lagers and ales for summer and hot days.



I'd like to take a moment and mention last month, a few of us Rangers attended the CIA's Operation Fermentation and our own Ranger Hank Keller took home the Distinguished Brewers award winning the most competition points of any other competing brewer. It was a great celebration at our table and if winnings medals for your Homebrew isn't a reason enough to compete, the bragging rights are a another. Just ask Hank!

The Bay Area Mashtronauts Lunar Rendezbrew opened registration on Saturday 3/11 and is filling up quickly for this

continues on page 2

FROM THE EDITOR



Greetings from chilly Southeast Pennsylvania. This is the time of the year I would rather be in Houston! (I reserve the right to change my mind come July. . .) OK, let's see what's new here. First, I'm happy to say we have another article submission by Mike Retzlaff from our New Orleans bureau. This one's on Session Beers (ties in nicely with this month's Beer of the Month theme). I would like add a couple of "Hear! Hear!"s to Paul Smith's point on the importance of trained beers judges in our group. It's not only critical for homebrew competitions to have standards & people who understand them, but it's also useful for just helping one describe the flavors, aromas, & other qualities of a given beer. T'is common ground. Please also note that I have added a few captions to the photos I've nicked off of Facebook. Just me imagining I was there! Lastly, does anyone know if we have any definite plans for National Homebrew Day? It's only about six weeks out. . .

Foam Rangers Homebrew Club

Grand Wazoo:

Hayden Charter

(wazoo@foamrangers.com)

Secondary Fermenter:

Robert Crowder

(robert.crowder@ngic.com)

Purser:

Patrick Elder

(purser@foamrangers.com)

Acting Scrivener:

Rosie Crowder

(RosieBee3@gmail.com)

Waswaz & IT Coordinator

Phil "Double Dipping" Verdick

(waswaz@foamrangers.com) &

(info@foamrangers.com)

Competition Coordinator:

Will Holobowicz

(powerhour@gmail.com)

Lone Star Circuit Coordinator:

Hank Keller

(kellerfamily89@comcast.net)

(From Out of the Waz page 1)

beer-only competition. It would be great to see other Foam Rangers take home some medals and have the chance to brag and show off their gold at an upcoming club meeting. If you have the chance to brew something or have a great beer stashed away, this is a great way to get feedback from local judges. Speaking of judges, they will need our help with this comp. If you have time, please consider volunteering, even if not BJCP certified.

This Saturday, 3/18 we have our March monthly meeting at Bad Astronaut in Houston from 1 - 3. No specific topics to mention unless someone has something they'd like to share. Always looking for volunteers to present a topic. Hope to see everyone there!

Cheers,
Waz

The Foam Ranger Brewsletter Urquell is published quasi-monthly by the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club. The editor is grateful for any articles or photos (Puleeze!). Brewsletter Editor: Scott "Was Bozo" Birdwell (sales@defalcos.com)

ABOUT LAST MONTH (and other conspiracy theories)

• Last month we met at Astral Brewing on North Shepherd. With better weather than last month, we had a slight improvement in turnout. About 14 Rangers made an appearance. A large variety of Belgian beers were shared ranging from the medium strength Dubbels up to the many Tripels, Golden Strongs, a quad and some other dark strong beers. There was a small raffle where a few prizes were given out (editor - "This raffle sucks!").

Topics of Discussion

• We discussed that the first half of the years meetings are all planned and have been posted on the website. Paul discussed the process of becoming BJCP certified and how beneficial it is for the club for members to become judges. Doak and Jimmy Page had actually just wrapped up the BOS for CIA's Operation Fermentation right before the meeting. Discussion then ensued regarding the OpFerm. Hank Keller could barely fit in the Astral front entrance after kicking butt and taking names at the OpFerm. He won three golds (with goblets!), a silver, and a bronze. In addition, he went home with the Distinguished Brewer Award for most points overall! Tyson Schindler also picked up a couple of silver medals. The club, overall didn't do so well. Better luck at the Bluebonnet, hopefully!

1936 Ad For Howard Hughes
Grand Prize "Famous" Beer

2036 Is Just Around
the Corner!



Southern Brewing



ITS OUR 2023 FOAM RANGERS CLUB SURVEY!

The Officers are interested to hear your feedback for the club. This survey only takes 3 - 4 minutes of your time - so sit back, crack a beer and please fill this out for our benefit.

Please just copy & paste into your web browser:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctWdMmGBpaxUscLYinrGT9zC4E390ZQBJ1lpctBJwh0oZwSA/viewform?usp=sf_link

SESSION BEERS

By Mike Retzlaff

I really don't know anyone who exhibits an exclusive thirst for Barleywine, Doppelbock, Wee Heavy, Tripel, or other high intensity beverages. It's often desirable to consume a lighter gravity beverage for several reasons. Sometimes you simply want to drink a number of pints without starting to drool, getting loud, and becoming "that guy." The lighter gravity beverage might be called a Session beer.

All sorts of beers are called Session beers but the term can be, and often is, misused and misleading. When compared to Barleywines, Doppelbocks, or Belgian Tripels, beers in the 5% to 6% range would certainly seem to be Session beers. I generally reserve the heavy duty beers for the evening when my day is finally winding down and there's no chance I'll be leaving the house. Maybe I've "smartened-up" over the years or perhaps I'm just a big wuss. My ego whispers to me that I'm simply being prudent. I don't think my ego is lying to me; at least in this instance.

I've seen all sorts of definitions of what a Small or Session beer is but it always comes in the form of someone's opinion. I've found no global mandate to denote the strength of these lighter gravity beers so I'll assert my own opinion. In the previous article on Small beers, I was referencing the Danes who exempted Temperance beers from taxation as they contained less than 3% abv. If we start there, a Session beer would contain between 3% and my opinion of 4.5% abv. These are admittedly arbitrary numbers but lacking any real authority to dispute them, they are the numbers I embrace. I've seen 5% listed by some as an upper limit but that seems a bit high for the purpose at hand and the limit always seems to crawl up to 5.5% and even higher. Small and Session beers are the only classes of beer that I gauge by alcohol content instead of OG or by style. Neither of these are considered beer "styles" any more than "big", "Summer", or "dark" beer would be.

To keep things in perspective, most global beer cultures think of beers in the 5.5% to 6% abv range as "strong" beers. That is roughly the same as most of our normal North American craft beers. Most German, Polish, Czech, and other European commercial lagers barely crest 5% to 5.2% abv in their standard offerings.

I notice more and more lower abv choices when shopping for craft beer. Many craft breweries are offering beers which weigh in at 5% abv or less. Stone Brewing, North Coast Brewing, St. Arnold's, Brooklyn Brewing, and Goose Island all offer beers which sport 4.5% abv or less. Some are heavily hopped while others seem to be a bit more balanced. In Great Britain, there are Ordinary Bitters, Best Bitters, Scottish Light, Scottish Heavy,

Scottish Export, Brown, and Mild ales. UK breweries produce literally hundreds of different beers which clock in between 3% and 4.5% . . . my stated Session beer parameters.

The Brewer's Association GABF guidelines state that virtually any "classic" style of beer can be scaled down to an abv parameter which makes it a "session" beer. Of course the drinkability of this creation is not supposed to suffer which means you might not be able to scale it down with a calculated ratio alone; you have to maintain the concept of balance. The GABF mandates a narrow window for Session beers (4% to 5%) and tends to see them as deflated "classic" styles. I see them as any existing style which falls within the parameters plus other styles only slightly scaled down just to get them under that 4.5% abv limit.

The American concept of "big is best but bigger is even better" seems to have peaked and many commercial craft brewers are going the other way to give consumers what they really seem to want (or at least what they seem to want right now.) Many home-brewers are doing exactly the same thing to provide themselves some latitude in deciding what they really want to drink. Perhaps that Double Chocolate Mint Imperial Lithuanian Stout with Chipotle, Basil, and Rhubarb @ 11½% abv wasn't really the right beer for the cook-out last weekend. By the way, is Uncle Fred still passed out in the bushes? Would someone check?

The concept of an IPA with only 4.2% abv might sound alien to many but they're out there. That's the same abv as Guinness Draught! Who could argue with an American Wheat beer at 4.4% abv? At a picnic, it can be nice and crisp, thirst quenching, and won't leave you drunk with a headache after drinking three pints and enduring as many hours of backyard sun! It also goes well with virtually any cook-out food, just like its 6% abv big brother.

Session beers are not restricted to ales. Most lager styles can easily fit under that 4.5% ceiling and many already do. Some of the Bock beers might work well as does Rauchbier, Schwarzbier, and certainly Oktoberfest. There are only a handful of styles which wouldn't fit the mold here. Most anything with Imperial, Wee, Strong, Doppel, or Tripel in the name probably could not successfully make the transition and remain as a recognizable original style.

Many of your own recipes can be adjusted to produce a Session beer. Something as simple as a plain-Jane Pale Ale can really shine as a lower alcohol beer. Session beers should augment and facilitate conversation. During quiet times, they should set the mood for contemplation; not beat the psyche into submission.

Next time we'll get into brewing these two beers.



Last Month's Meeting at Astral Brewing - Photos by Charie Proctor & Hayden Charter*



Bird's Eye View!



May the Schwarz Be With You!

Pete Wins a Foot of Air!



This Raffle Sucks!

The BS Committee!



The Astral Running Club?





Astral Money Shot!



Oh, Really?!



Going For the Gusto!



Hank's OpFerm Booty!



**Foamies at OpFerm
Will, Hayden & Hank!**



**Cattywompus
Charie!**



**Do You Have
Any Jacks?**

Calendar of Events

March 18 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting Bad Astronaut Brewing 1 - 3 pm

March 18 - Bluebonnet Awards Event (Dallas)

April 15 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting Klaus Brewing 1 - 3 pm

May 6 - National Homebrew Day (TBD)

May 20 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting Eureka Heights Brewing 1 - 3 pm

May 20 - Mashtronauts Lunar Rendezbrew Awards

June 17 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting Equal Parts Brewing 1 - 3 pm

June 25 - KGB Big Batch Brew Batch - St. Arnolds (Entry deadline: June 16)

July ?? - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting TBD

For more Events, go to: <https://foamrangers.com/clubevents.php>



I Want To Be Somebody!
Sign Me Up to Become A Member!
Foam Rangers Homebrew Club



Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Mobile Phone _____ Other Phone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Amount Paid _____

Membership Fees per year \$30 individual/\$60 Family

Paid between December 1 - December 31 \$25/\$55 (Pay early & save!)

Paid between January 1 - June 30 \$30/\$60

Paid between July 1 - September 30 \$25/\$55

Paid between October 1 - November 30 \$30/\$60 (Includes the next year!)

Please Make Checks (Remember them?) Payable To: The Foam Rangers