



THE FOAM RANGERS Brewsletter Urquell

October 2023 Volume 43 Issue 10



Monthly Meeting
Saturday!
1 - 3 pm

October 21st
Ovinnik Brewing
7201 Wynnpark
Houston, TX 77008

This Month's Styles:
Pumpkin Beers

Next Up!
Ovinnik Brewing!



Beer Tasting!

★ Pumpkin Beers!

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Out (of) The Wazoo

October Greetings Rangers!

Hope everyone is enjoying the now cooler weather and enjoying some festive beers as we approach Halloween. I think back to my time spent in San Diego when about now we'd start to see Evil Dead Red popping up in stores, a Red IPA of sorts from AleSmith Brewing. It was always fun to see this seasonal beer pop up in stores and on tap. Are there any beers you all look forward to hear in town? Anything you're stocking up on?



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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)



FROM THE EDITOR HOMEBREWING 2023



I have to admit feeling a little sad that for the first time in forty years, we will not be hosting the Dixie Cup Homebrew Competition this month. Sad, yes.

. . surprised, no. These are tough times for homebrew. When I first walked into DeFalco's in January 1978 (yes, forty-five years ago) with the notion of dipping my toe into the homebrewing water, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. DeFalco's was primarily a winemaking shop, with a smattering of homebrew supplies & equipment. Excuse me. . . I meant "sparkling barleywine" supplies. You see, homebrewing was still a federal crime back then. Wine? Well, that was okay. Fortunately, Senator Alan Cranston slipped a rider on a transportation bill & it passed both houses. President Carter signed the bill 45 years ago this week! Unfortunately, many states, including Texas, still had laws on the books outlawing homebrewing. We were liberated in 1983. Alabama & Mississippi just legalized

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our hobby a mere ten years ago. Still, despite a frustratingly slow pace, it felt like we were heading in the right direction. Homebrewing was becoming more mainstream, not just some crackpot hobby of your Uncle Zeke! And, while we've experienced our share of hills & valleys as a hobby, I didn't worry about the long-term survivability of it. Then, starting in 2014, business started dropping off. Not steeply, but the wrong direction. We all thought that this was just another valley coming before the next hill. The hill never came. At one point about that time the Houston area had nine homebrew shops (way too many!). Now, we're down to three, scattered pretty far apart at that. Philadelphia has one, unimpressive shop with another tiny, but decent one, in the burbs, where I work from time to time. There really isn't a viable homebrew club in Philadelphia. I am so fortunate to live in a small community with a very viable club. As small as our group is, at least we have survived! Homebrew clubs are struggling all across the country. But, so are other non-brewing clubs. No doubt that COVID had something to do with the disruption. But, there are

ABOUT LAST MONTH

(Special Thanks to Hank Keller for his observations!)

The September meeting took place at our new home Ovinnik Brewing on Wynnpark. The style of the month for September was Oktoberfest beers. Our secondary brought a few commercial examples, and (surprise!) there was homebrew to be had. Attendance was pretty good, with about a dozen or so members attending.

The big news is our Wazoo and wife recently had twins! (September 22?). The smart money says he will be indisposed for the remainder of his term! Our secondary, Robert Crowder, will be filling in. Also, as November is election month, we need nominations for officers for 2024. (Your editor recommends you volunteer now before you are volunteered for a less desirable position. Missing the meeting is tantamount to agreeing to serve whatever office is bestowed upon you!)

We're a bit light on content this month, and Hayden's mention of Evil Dead Red Ale prompted me to pull out and modify an old-but-goody standby recipe. No charge!

RED OTTER ALE

13 lbs. Pale Malt

1 lb. Medium Crystal Malt

8 oz.. Double Roast Crystal Malt

1 oz. Carafo Malt

1 oz. Chinook hops (bittering - 60 minutes)

1 oz. Cascades hops (flavoring - 15 more minutes)

1 oz. Cascades hops (finishing - add when wort temperature drops to 170°F)

1 oz. Cryo Cascades hops (dry hop)

1 pkg. Burton water salts (in mash)

1 pkg Safale US-05 or West Coast Ale Yeast (or Wyeast American #1056, or American II #1272 or White Labs California or California V)

O.G. - 1.066

F.G. - 1.015

Mash into ~ 4½ gallons of liquor at ~ 168°F. Stir thoroughly for five minutes. You should end up with wort at about 152°F. You can make minor adjustments with boiling water or ice cubes. Maintain temperature for an hour, stirring occasionally. Recirculate until clear, then sparge with 168°F water to collect 6 - 6½ gallons. Personally, I use 5.2 pH Stabilizer in the mash & sparge. It works for me. Your mileage may vary. Add Chinook hops to wort as you begin to sparge. Boil 60 minutes, then add the first oz. of Cascades. Boil an additional 15 minutes, cut heat and cool immediately. Add finishing hops when temp drops below 170°F. Cool & pitch yeast. Add 1 oz. Cryo Cascades as a dry hop. Bottle or keg!

BREAKING BAD

By Mike Retzlaff

Anyone who has brewed beer knows about or at least has heard of hot break and cold break. There are all sorts of ideas about how to deal with both; some work well and others don't.

One good indicator that you've had a good hot break is checking the boiling wort after the foam collapses. Spoon out a bit of the wort from the kettle. You'll see lots of little flakes in the wort; think egg drop soup. That's the clumping of albumins (globular proteins), free amino acids, unconverted starch, and fatty acids. All of these contribute to chill haze and beer instability.

I used to be plagued with boil-overs. I used my stainless steel spoon to stir the foam back into the beginning-to-boil wort and that seemed to work. Sometimes I couldn't keep up with the foam and I'd have a boil-over anyway. Then I got the bright idea of simply skimming the foam from the kettle to solve my hot break dilemma. I immediately noticed that my finished and conditioned beer wouldn't raise a head when poured. After a few batches, it dawned on me that whatever was in that foam was the same material that I had relied upon to raise that whipped cream head on my beers that I had taken so much pride in before.

I started to use a mesh strainer to scoop the foam from the top and try to push it back into the wort which worked okay but constant attention was required. At least it abated the vicious and messy boil-over problems.

At some point I started to use First Wort Hopping. I lautered the mash run-off into the kettle directly onto a portion of the hops. The kettle foam was now easily managed. I fathomed that the early hopping dropped the pH of the wort sufficiently to inhibit the formation of foam. Don't use a mesh strainer if you use FWH. The strainer works like a magnet to capture hop particles which is not good. It'll make a real mess and who knows how much of the hops are removed from the kettle? Your final IBUs will be all over the place but certainly not what you calculated and intended.

Cold break contains pretty much the same components as hot break plus polyphenols (hop

tannins) and hop particles. I use an immersion chiller coil (which is boiled in the kettle for the last 10 min.) and then hook my garden hose to it at flame out. After the wort cools sufficiently, I bring over a plastic pail with ice and water. In the bottom of the pail I have an aquarium pump. I disconnect the garden hose and run the plastic discharge hose from the IC coil to the pump and simply reverse the water flow in the IC coil. It all stays sanitized and the chill water recirculates into the ice water bucket. You'll get a better cold break the faster you chill the wort. A counter-flow chiller usually provides a very good cold break. I don't have one and do fine without it.

Some brewers go the extra mile in sending only the most pristine wort to the fermenter. I take a different approach. There are a number of nutrients the yeast needs for a healthy fermentation in that murky stuff that's normally separated from the wort before pitching. I know of some brewers who pitch yeast in the wort - hops, sludge and all. They just deal with the dregs at a later date. Their beer comes out just fine. That's the main thing, isn't it? Of course, these brewers are getting a good hot and cold break in the kettle.

Out Of The Wazoo - Continued from page 1

Thanks to all who showed up to last month's meeting. During our next upcoming meeting we have the following items we want to discuss and need input from you all!

- 1. 2024 Officers - We are accepting nominations for next year's Officer Positions. You can nominate people ;) or volunteer someone. All positions are open.**
- 2. Jeff Reilly Homebrewers Award - have you noticed someone going above to support the club? Nominate them for the Jeff Reilly Award!**
- 3. 2024 Dixie Cup - Hank Keller has volunteered to Coordinate Dixie Cup XXXX, but he can't do it alone. He needs a Head Judge and Head Steward to support him and make it run successfully. Please reach out to Hank if interested in supporting this historic event.**
- 4. BAMs Oktoberfantasy Homebrew Tournament - bring 2 bottles of any beer you'd like to enter in this tournament to this month's meeting. We will do tasting reviews on one bottle and those chosen to represent the Foam Rangers will have the second bottle entered into the competition. We need a total of three entries to represent the club. Judging will be completed by brewers of Vallensons' Brewing Co on 11/11.**

Thank you all for supporting this great club in 2023!

-Waz

The scene of the crime!



The toilet? Go West, Young Man!



Hank! Is that your doll she's holding? No fooling?



other factors, too, some pre-dating the pandemic shutdown. There is an old saying that "10% of the members do 90% of the work." The 2023 version is "5% of the members do 95% of the work!" Organizations need folks to step up so that we all can enjoy. So, the point here is Hank Keller is stepping up to organize the 2024 Dixie Cup XL. He's going to need a lot of help! I'm planning on doing what I can from here in Pennsylvania, but he's going to need "boots on the ground" to pull this thing off! Like Uncle Sam, The Foam Rangers Need You! Now it's your turn to step up to the plate! - Scott

Calendar of Events

- Oct 21 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting 1 - 3 pm (Ovinnik Brewing)
- Nov ?? - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting & Elections TBD (Ovinnik Brewing?)
- Dec ?? - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting/Annual Holiday Party (Ovinnik Brewing?)

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