



THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

New Year, Same Old Newsletter!

January 2011 - Volume 31 Pints - Issue 1

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January

Meeting:

Friday,

January 21st

7:00 p.m.

at DeFalco's

Grand Wazoo Wooded By Zealots

By Bev Blackwood

Newly elected Grand Wazoo Kyle Jones was offered the opportunity to defect to the Austin Zealots on a recent trip to Austin. "They were all over me" Jones claims, "they kept plying me with beer from their many brewpubs and urging me to stay!" The Zealots deny any attempt on the Wazoo's loyalty. "We just gave Kyle some beers" stated Primary Fermenter Corey Martin. "Then he started rambling about how the Foam Rangers couldn't win anything and how good the beer was." He grinned. "Must suck to be in Houston!"

The Foam Rangers have a long history of Grand Wazoos who have "retired" out of state... David Cato (Portland), Autumn Woods (Somewhere in Oregon), Brad Kraus (Santa Fe) and mostrecently, Was-was-Waz Stuart (Stewie-Baby) West in Austin, who was also at the Zealots meeting that night.



Out (of) The Wazoo

By Kyle Jones,
Grand Wazoo

Same old shit, different office. Well somehow I still find myself having to write an article every month even though I got rid of the Scrivener title. But at least I get to wear this cool hat while I do it. Although it does make my head itch a little bit.

All joking aside (well, maybe not), I'm very excited about what promises to be a great year for the Foam Rangers. We're doing our best to bring the campout back this year, and there are some other surprises in store. As it stands right now, it looks like



Grand Wazoo Jones hears the lures of Austin's charms

"Nobody should assume I am here for the beer" stated Was-was-Waz West, "I am here (hic) for the scenery." He and Mrs. Was, Sandy hosted the Wazoo at the Black Star Co-Op. "Once he gets used to the Austin vibe, he'll be fine." Smiled Sandy in an unguarded moment.

Some Austin Zealots weren't quite as
(Continued on page 8)

the campout will be held on the weekend of April 9, 2011. The campout doesn't happen by magic, and it takes a lot of work from a lot of people to make it happen. So you know what comes next - a call for volunteers. We need people to help clear brush, prepare the site, cook food, plan games, clean up, etc, etc. Please let me know if you are interested in helping with the campout. While we're on the topic of volunteering, service to the club comes in a spectrum of activities. Some members do it quietly, some members do it very publicly (no jokes, please). Some members enter competitions, some members are prolific judges, some are club officers, some make sure you have food at meetings, some write the Brewsletter, and the list goes on and on. I am writing this for two reasons -first, because if you feel like you're not
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The Brewsletter Urquell
Official Organ of the
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First and foremost, a big thanks to the officers for getting their articles in on schedule! Made my life a LOT easier! I'll apologize for the lameness of the "funny" article that isn't. I just had to do something with our visit to Austin and the whole "Waz defects to Zealots" angle wasn't working out.

On a personal note, I am glad to see Sharon's financial analysis, it's important to know where our beer is coming from!

Dark Beers For Winter's Dark Days



By Jaime Robles
Secondary Fermenter

First, I'd like to say that I'm quite excited about being your Secondary this year. It'll be interesting to see how meetings go from the other side of the bar. If in your national or global travels you

see a beer you'd like to share with the club, please send me an email at secondary@foamrangers.com and I'll be glad to feature it. I hope that everyone has recovered from the holidays and is ready to pick up another year of great beer tasting, and if you are new to the club, welcome! I'm the guy behind the bar that you gotta be nice to if you want to drink some beer.

So here we are at the darkest meeting of the year – darkest beers, that is. Today's meeting will showcase a variety of porters and stouts. What words ending in '–er' should we expect to hear during this meeting (to which our classy Foamies will promptly respond "hardly know 'er")? Porter, darker, roastier, Procter, toastier, maltier, richer, 'complexer'...you get the idea. Folks, your ears and taste buds are in for quite a treat tonight.

History

The history of these two dark styles is heavily interwoven, and it is said that one arose from the other. Porter originated in 18th century London where it was made from a 1/3 each blend of ales, or "three threads"– a brown ale, a pale ale and a well-matured soured strong ale. This dark fermented beverage was heavily consumed by the working class, namely porters, and that's where it gets its name. Creative, I know. As time passed and brewing technology improved, a single "entire" recipe was formulated that would emulate the character obtained from the three thread mixture. Originally, the beer was brewed with 100% brown malt, which gave it a rich, smoky character, dark amber tint; not the dark brown, almost black, color that we are used to. Due to increased taxation on the total amount of grains used and improvement of malting techniques, brewers began to opt for more the more efficient

pale malt and draw the dark color from black malts (i.e. black patent). With the increasing inclination of people's palates towards pale ales, porters slowly became a thing of the past. Thanks to the craft brewing revolution, however, porters are now easily available at most local watering holes.

Stout was the name given to a strong or "stoutly" porter at the time. The word porter was eventually dropped, leaving us with just plain ol' stout. Such vast quantities of porter and stout made it into Ireland from London that a Dublin brewer by the name of Arthur Guinness decided to create his own interpretation of the style. That's where we get the iconic thick, creamy yet very refreshing dry stout. Stronger versions of stouts were used for export throughout Europe, Russia and the Western colonies. Stout recipes were adapted in such a way to please the palates of these places but more importantly to survive the long, arduous journeys. Russian Imperial Stout, anyone?

Stylistic Description

A porter can be described in general terms as a medium-bodied dark ale with a moderate coffee and/or burnt malt character and a moderate hoppiness. As of this article, the BJCP recognizes three styles of porters:

1. A brown porter is the smallest of the porters with a restrained roasted character and a dark brown hue. Notes of chocolate, bread, toffee and/or nuts can be found in most examples. Hops are low to moderate, with a balance more towards the malt. Could be considered sessionable at the lower end of the ABV range.
2. Robust porters are known for their moderately strong roast/burnt profile and richer malt and greater opacity. Overall, they can have a sharp character due to the higher hopping rate and higher percentage of roasted malts used than in a brown porter. A robust porter could easily be confused with a stout but just remember that a stout has even more of a pronounced roasted malt character. This is definitely the more popular of the porter styles to drink and brew.
3. Baltic porters are harder to come by, but they're out there. While some are fermented with ale yeast, if you want the true Baltic character, try those that are lagered. The cleaner fermentation profile augments the perception of roasted malt and complex flavors. I interpret the BJCP guidelines for

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What Do Your Dues Do For You?



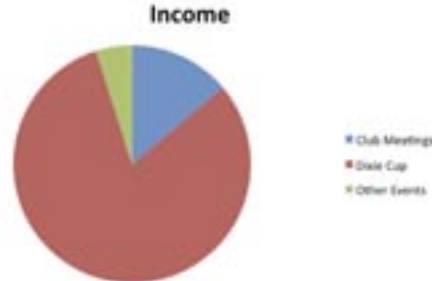
*By Sharon Hayes,
Purser*

Yeah, it's dues time again folks. Is anyone surprised? I hope NOT and thank you to anyone who has already renewed for 2011 (this includes all you nice folks who will pay up at the January meeting).

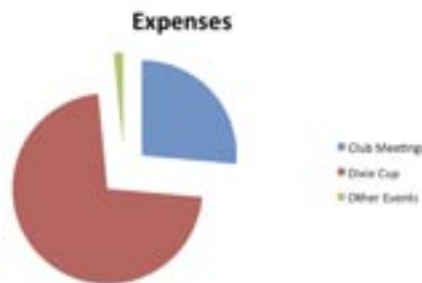
Paying your dues now means I have the bulk of my paperwork done for the year, so I can update your status in the database and get the banking over with. I might even be able to spend some time running around during the meetings! It also means that we have some cash flow to pay for food and beer of the month.

It's also time to start thinking about Dixie Cup 2011. What? Already? Hey this event is not magic and does not create itself. The officers have already started working on themes, speakers, arrangements, etc. If you have already volunteered, excellent. If you haven't, why not? Don't know what your opportunities are? The various coordinators will be twisting arms and begging soon enough but here's my two cents...consider spending one or two hours at the registration table this year. It's great people watching, you can verbally abuse everyone who wanders past and you'll be helping the club. It's only an hour or two and it's easier than brewing.

Have you ever wondered where our money comes from or goes to? It should be no surprise that we spend most of our money putting the Dixie Cup on but I'll bet you didn't know it contributes (nicely) to our cash flow for beers of the month. Check out the pie charts for a closer look.



Dues income is 14% of the total and Meeting Costs (food & beer) is 26% of expenses. Dixie Cup income is 81% of the total while its costs are only 71% of expenses.



Raffle sales, badges, other small stuff accounts for 5% of income and Lone Star Circuit or BJCP classes and exams are 2% of expenses.

Beer of the Month

Calendar

- ☆
- January 21st, 2011
Porter & Stout
☆
- February 18th, 2011
Barleywine & Holiday Beer
☆
- March 18th, 2011
Belgian Ales & Lambics
☆
- April 15th, 2011
Homebrew!
☆
- May 20th, 2011
Bocks, Dark Lagers, Dunkel
☆
- June 17th, 2011
Wheat, Wit, Fruit & Rye
☆
- July 15th, 2011
Homebrew!
☆
- August 19th, 2011
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

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

FIRST EVENT:

**THE BLUEBONNET
BREW-OFF**

IRVING, TEXAS

**ENTRY DEADLINE
FEBRUARY 25, 2011**

**BLUEBONNET BREW-OFF
MARCH 25-26, 2011**

WWW.LONESTARCIRCUIT.COM

Why Do We Compete?



**By Bev
Blackwood II,
Competition
Coordinator**

Why compete? Why indeed? You can easily hand your beer to any fellow club member and get an impromptu evaluation on the spot and they will likely thank you for sharing and not charge you an \$8.00 entry fee. Of course, you won't win anything beyond their gratitude for sharing and some informal insight on the beer either.

I compete for a couple of reasons. First, to get structured feedback on my beer. It's fine and dandy to hand my latest to Beeriac and get his evaluation, but that evaluation won't be as nuanced and careful as it is when he's seated on a judging panel. Also, I'll get that evaluation in writing, which gives me a chance to pore over it and the recipe side by side and see what I got wrong (or right.) My second reason is a bit less practical. It gives me a reason to interact in the broader homebrewing community. That would mean clubs other than just the Foam Rangers. We're a great club, but every club is different and seeing those differences suggests ways we can improve our own club (not to mention our own competition.) By entering Bluebonnet, Alamo City, Sunshine Challenge and other events, I have a reason to be there, to get out and interact. I am, at my core, very slow to get out and interact. It's way

easier to send an e-mail than to call, it's easier to call than to get in the car and drive over... You get the idea. (It also explains why the Brewsletter is a particular passion of mine...) In short, it helps me get out more.

Of course, winning doesn't suck either and I have a box full of ribbons to remind me that my beer isn't too shabby. You do reach a point though where ribbons, steins and winning in general isn't what's important. It's being out with the people and lending a hand at their competitions and enjoying their company. I realize that not everyone has the time, money or desire to compete. However, you should try to get out of the Foam Rangers now and then if only to meet the Mark Wedges, Ed Measoms, Charlie Milans and John Donaldsons that inhabit the other clubs and competitions out there. You won't be sorry you did!

The first event of the 2011 Lone Star Circuit is the Bluebonnet Brew-Off. Entries are due by February 25th and I will be collecting entries at the February meeting for transport to Dallas. We may piggyback on the Bay Area Mashtronaut's ride up or I may go on behalf of the club depending on our entry count. Last year wasn't exactly a stellar one for the Foam Rangers competitively. Over one half of the club's total points last year can be attributed to Jeff Reilly and his partnership with Jimmy Paige, the J&J Brew Crew. Rolland Pate was the only other Foam Ranger to crack the top ten list for individual points from the Foam Rangers. The club finished third to the Bay Area Mashtronauts and the circuit winners, the Austin Zealots. Yes, we defended the Dixie

Cup admirably, but we scarcely made a ripple anyplace else. I will be entering (and hopefully attending) every Lone Star Circuit event this year, trying my best to uphold our club's competitive tradition and you're more than welcome to join me!

5627!

Scenes From An Officer's Meeting



**By Peter Lott,
Scrivener**

Gathered at the Petrol Station at 3pm and waited until 4pm when the WAZ decided to show up. Not Missed.

Sharon passed out financial info sheets... Everyone wondered what it was.

Paypal Account being set up so deadbeats can pay up without leaving the couch.

MCAB Judging at St. Arnold's on January 23 at 8am, Show up.

Campout tentative for April 2 or could be the 9th... Maybe?

Austin Pub crawl early June or September or some other month.

Dixie Cup scheduled for October 20, 21, 22.

A club only Competition each month was discussed...

Who to get to speak at Dixie Cup?

Officers discussed buying the Texans since we have such a full banks account. Renaming them to the Carboys suggested by Secondary. Meeting went to hell after this discussion.

Decided to drink instead of trying to make any further sense because Was Waz, Andrew, Sean and Mr. Excitement showed up.

Repeat again next Month!





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(VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY TIME TRAVEL)



This Month in Foam Ranger History

By Sean Lamb,
Club Historian
(Sorta)

25 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

A "first ever" slate of Officers is identified – "President" Andy Bradley, "Vice President" of Meetings Brad Kraus, "Vice President" of Special Event Scott Birdwell and "Secretary/Treasurer" Bob Capshew. Editor Kathy Schott recounts a trip to Belgium with stops in LaRoche, Brussels and Leuven. The 1st Christmas party is reviewed. Dr. Strange Brew answers the question "When, for instance, does a pale ale cease being a pale ale and start becoming a strong brew?" The Rantings and Ravings column discusses moving the club meeting from the 3rd Thursday to the 3rd Friday of the month.

At the Meeting:

No record found, ask Scott Birdwell or John Adams if they remember.

Other Events:

None known.

20 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Outgoing Grand Wazoo Chris Todd reviews the year that has passed and gives guidance for the next year. "One word of caution to active club members. There will be times when you will be doing a lot of work for the club with little help and seemingly little appreciation. Do not let this discourage you or make you peevish and bitter, that will only alienate anyone who might be willing to help." Brewsletter editor John Donaldson interviews Mike Seidensticker, ex-Foam Ranger Secondary and DeFalco about brewing and his move to El Paso. A Houston Press reprint about Scott Birdwell and his

hopes to open a microbrewery is included. John Donaldson covers the Beer of the Month a Stouts.

At the Meeting:

Held at the planned location of the Magnolia Brewing Company at 5211 Eigel in the Heights on January 18th. Elections were held and Lou Carannante was elected Grand Wazoo, John Gonzales Secondary Fermenter, and John Smollen Purser/Scrivener. Lou immediately took up the responsibilities of the Waz and conducted the club's business. Beer of the Month was Stouts, with Dragon, Sam Smith's, Sierra Nevada and Youngs Stouts all presented for the club's enjoyment.

Other Events:

A "Mini Pub Crawl" was held on the west side of town on January 26th. I personally can't remember much about it except a stop at Shakespeare's and maybe the Hops House. Sadly, no written account exists.

15 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Outgoing Grand Wazette Autumn Woods failed to submit an article, but Jim Harper recapped the "Gang Brew-in" held at the Bank Draft in December. A Dixie Cup travelogue from Sarah White of the Boston Wort Processors is reprinted from Brewprint, the BWP's newsletter. "At the tasting of Fred's Nuts there were no food fights, Instead, Trixie Delight, my inflatable sheep companion, appeared along with Mis Spiggy, Steve's new inflatable Pig The party broke up when Fred's Nuts had all been tasted and one of the CC (Crescent City) people produced what they have become famous for."

At the Meeting:

Held at the Oddfellows Lodge in the Heights. Elections were held and Wes Woods took the bit of the Wazhood in his teeth. Kar-El Chaloupka took the office of Secondary, Tom "Beerbo" Witaneck took over Purser, and Andy Thomas took up the Scrivener's pencil. Beerbo tried to get up interest in an Aeros game, The Sly Bastards volunteered to get people to brew to cover all of the beer styles for the Dixie Cup, and Kar-El swears he will buy more beer for the next meeting

Other Events:

The "Gang Brew-In" was held again at the Bank Draft brewpub on Sunday January 14th

10 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

New Grand Wazoo Bev Blackwood lays out his plans for the new year. "...my first edict...be a homebrewer. You can't stand your ground along brewers if you don't actually brew." Secondary Jimmie Paige covers Stouts and Porters "While many of you thought you might be reading about a small snail who gets his ass kicked, or a lesbian-toasting volcano, this article is all about the beer." Kuyler and Kari Doyle wrap up the Christmas party with a take-off on the "The Night Before Christmas" poem. Bev does something weird in his "Watch This Space" column and suggests that everyone in Houston enter competitions as a Foam Ranger. Editor David Cato laments the loss of Phil Endacott to Alaska and his own move to Portland, and the pending move of DeFalco's.

At the Meeting:

Held at DeFalco's on Robinhood in the Village. Bev conducted the meeting, Jimmy handed out the Porters and Stouts including Alaskan Smoked Porter, Eel River Ravensbrau Porter, Butte Creek Porter, Bert Grant's Imperial Stout, Napa Ale Works Oatmeal Stout, and Lost Coast 8 Ball Stout.

Other Events:

None Noted.

5 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

T-Bob recounts how "Colby Sheridan's just published book *Hopped Up! My Brewing Life With the Foam Rangers* has sent shockwaves through Houston's oldest homebrew club. The revealing book by the recently traded Foam Ranger makes serious allegations about club members' brewing methods and has resulted in the American Homebrewing Association conducting hearings and issuing new entry guidelines." New Grand Wazoo Rob Kolacny shares his life story and gets folks acquainted with the new regime. Scrivener

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The Waz gets hat envy...



Ho, Ho, Ho!
Merry Christmas!



That is one big ass elf!



Just wait until this Frito
pie gets mixed in with
some homebrew!

Foam Ranger Foto Pages!

Are mommy and daddy
done drinking yet?



Jaime helps Erik update
his Facebook status.



Bye-bye damage deposit!



What IS this shit?

This computer sucks!



I got a funny hat, am I
Wazoo now?



Insert obligatory joke about Erik's balls here...

Kyle's Wazoo for 30 seconds and he already has announcements?



DeWalt sucks up to the new Waz right away...



Doak says farewell to "Fez head."

Foam Ranger Foto Pages!

Jaime gets caught playing with his wood.



"Speak no?" Really?



Sean's broken ass continues to present problems.



Naughty or Nice?



Jackson and Lisa go "pet shopping."

(Continued from page 1)
 contributing to the club, you may be, but just not in a very public way. Second, if you're thinking about becoming more active in the club, there are numerous ways to do it, and not just by being an officer. If there's something specific you want to do, then do it. If you're not sure where you would fit best, then ask an officer and we'll try to help you figure it out. Homebrew. (Ostensibly) the reason we are all here. One of my favorite parts about our monthly meetings is tasting the homebrew that members bring. One in particular that I recall is a tart cherry mead Buck brought to the pool party. There is also a benefit for those who bring homebrew to meetings - the Foam Rangers are blessed with many excellent judges, and they are always willing to give you critical feedback to help you improve your brewing. So, whether or not it fits the style of the month, bring your homebrew to the meeting. This brings me to my next effort, a monthly competition. This is both an opportunity for newer brewers to get feedback on their beers, and for newer judges to learn from more experienced judges. One entry per person per month will be allowed, and a given beer may only be entered once during

a year. Points will be awarded based on your place each month - one point for third, two for second, and three for first. Prizes will be awarded at the end of the year based on total points accumulated. Only one bottle is needed, but it must be delivered to the meeting by 7:00 pm. I'll end my first Brewsletter article as Wazoo by doing something I probably don't do often enough - thanking the businesses and the people behind the businesses that make possible a lot of what we do. First and foremost is DeFalco's and Scott Birdwell. Besides being a big driving force for homebrew in Houston for a long time, Scott has been the biggest supporter of the Foam Rangers - giving us a place to host meetings, donating items to our raffles, and sponsoring events are just a few of the things for which we have to thank Scott. Second is Saint Arnold and Brock Wagner. Without his support, we wouldn't have a place to sort, store, and judge beer for Dixie Cup and MCAB. Also, Saint Arnold supports us with lots of beer, which I'm sure no one minds. So Scott and Brock, thanks for all your support of the Foam Rangers over the years. Here's to a great year for the Foam Rangers, and start preparing your entries for Bluebonnet.

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 enthused. "Does he enter any contests?" asked Jay McEvers, part of the Lone Star Circuit's Homebrewing team of the Year. "We could use the help." Taking a drink from his cup he eyed former Wazoo George West and murmured, "Some people are just here for the beer."



Jaime's guard cat stands watch over the MCAB entries. Judging is this Sunday!

(Continued from page 1)
 Sean Lamb fakes an account of the Homebrewers Holiday party, you know he had too much to drink to remember it all. New Secondary Ferment Titanic Bob Daugherty fills us in on porters and stouts. Pictures from the Holiday Party fill out the issue.

At the Meeting:
 Held at DeFalco's on Stella Link. Secondary Titanic Bob poured 73 different Porters and Stouts, along with musical accompaniment for some of the beers. Grand Wazoo Rob Kolacny started out saying something about some online membership database with passwords available "when you pay your F***ng dues". He guarantees that the server is off shore so it's free from subpoenas. Club members riding in the MS 150 harassed folks for donations. Titanic Bob wowed the crowd with the 3-gallon "Rocket Pack" beer back-pack serving vessel.

Other Events
 None Noted.



WE'VE MOVED

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Map showing location at 2000 Lyons Ave, Houston, TX 77002.

(Continued from page 1)

a Baltic porter as saying that a brown porter had intimate relations with a schwarzbier and somehow out came this higher octane complex elixir. Or if you want to ignore my interpretation, just think of it as an Imperial Porter.

There. Moving on.

Stouts are black and opaque in color, with a stronger roast/burnt character than most porters. Common descriptors include dry, sweet, thick, bitter, rich, chocolate, burnt, coffee, licorice. Now picture an imperial pint glass filled with a black liquid, crowned with a tan and creamy head. To capture the complexity of stouts and the ever-growing ingenuity of brewers, the BJCP has broken up stouts into 6 categories:

1. Dry stouts (a.k.a. Irish stouts) have a strong roast/coffee character with a subtle sourness, a creamy texture and dry finish. A very sessionable and refreshing style, indeed.

2. As far as Sweet stouts – well, you guessed it—they are sweet. Sometimes also referred to as milk stouts, they can be sweet to the point of being cloying. This sweetness is accomplished through the addition of lactose during the boil, which cannot be metabolized by yeast. This sweetness enhances the chocolate character on the palate and can be the gateway of non-dark beer drinkers to start enjoying the pleasures of a roasted beer. As with the other stouts, the moderate bitterness comes from the use of British hops and roast unmalted barley. By the way, please don't add real milk to your beer.

3. An Oatmeal stout is very similar to a sweet stout, but with the addition of oats (duh!) to the mix. About 5-10% of your grist should be enough to avoid issues with lautering. The oats contribute greatly to the full, creamy body of this style. Want some added complexity? Toast the oats for 60 minutes in a 275°F oven, turning them frequently so that they don't burn. You'll want to eat oatmeal cookies afterwards. You've been warned.

4. Describing a Foreign Extra stout can be a challenge since it's quite a broad category. To simplify things, FES can be broken into tropical

and export styles. Both have similar roast characteristics but primarily differ in strength and mouthfeel. In a nutshell, tropical versions are sweeter (strong milk stout), whereas the export has a stronger alcohol presence and dryness.

5. American stout...well we took a FES and made it hoppier, roastier/burnt, more alcoholic, etc, etc. Bold American innovation.

6. And finally, the Russian Imperial Stout. The badass mofo of stouts. It's like the Baltic Porter's older sibling. Rich, thick and complex, with bold notes of coffee, dark chocolate, dark fruit and a noticeable, yet smooth, booze. The high alcohol content and hopping rate allowed for this hearty ale to make it all the way to the Russian royalty in good shape. Personally, I'd drink this instead of vodka.

Tips

It is very easy to overdo the dark grains when brewing a porter or stout. A good percentage for total roasted malt in a stout recipe is around 10-12%. Cut down to around 5-7% for a porter. More is not necessarily better with roasted grains. Since you are using a decent amount of roasted grains, your mash pH will more than likely drop. Counteract this either by using a buffer (a.k.a. 5.2 Mash Stabilizer) or calcium carbonate. The three specialty malts that will help you add a rich complexity to your dark ale are mid-to-dark crystals, chocolate malts and roasted barley. If you decide to use black patent, do so with extreme caution and in very small quantities since it can impart a harsh ash-like character to your final product (I'm talking ounces here). Go with a regular English Ale or Irish Ale yeast to create some fruity esters

and leave some residual sweetness. I suppose you could throw in some other weird yeast like a Belgian strain but warn me before you let me try it...and it won't be to style. These two styles, with their layers of flavor, lend themselves perfectly for the use of post-fermentation flavorings. These can include coffee, chocolate, coconut, wood chips, liquors, sweet fruits, tart berries, peppers...you name it. As I said before, no milk, please. If you'd like to read more about these two amazing and complex styles, I highly recommend you pick up books 5 and 10, 'Porter' and 'Stout', from the Classic Beer Styles Series.

Food Pairing

The moderate roast flavors and dryness of a robust porter go very well with a beef roast, a hearty stew or something smoked with a smooth wood, such as pecan. Use Gruyère as an appetizer and finish off the meal with some toasted coconut chocolate bars.

For a stout, I'd start off with a round of raw oysters with a Guinness Draught. Since the dry stout was so drinkable, I go ahead and pour an oatmeal stout next to accompany my mole Poblano. Since I still have some room left and I'm not driving, I'll do a digestif with a goblet of RIS and some chocolate cheesecake.

These beers are also great for cooking. A stack of stout chocolate chip pancakes with bacon caramelized in brown sugar should help you with tomorrow's hangover.

RISpectfully yours, Jaime





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A Look Back: An Interview With Steve Roberts Part Two

By Buck Wyckoff

B: Yeah. We better change the subject. I got that placemat you gave me that has all your beers on it and everything. And if I use that as a guide for your whole line and everything...has anything changed, er? [Placemat long since misplaced. No idea what the lineup was.]

S: No, well...

B: What are all the rotating things you do that wouldn't be reflected on that?

S: Right. Starting next week, we're going to have James "I Feel Good" Brown Ale on tap.

B: I feel good? Yeah.

S: Yeah. We're going to have our brown ale on.

B: So that's next week? Now you make a brown ale already though, don't you?

S: I've never made a brown ale in my life.

B: Oh well, I don't know where I thought that.

S: No. I don't like brown ales, generally.

B: Steve doesn't like wheat beers, so I guess you'll never be making those.

S: I do like real German wheat beers. We will be making a real German wheat beer in June.

B: You know, I was drinking Jeff's wheat beer at the Bank Draft last night. I thought he captured a little of that German character. I was impressed. He had the phenolics and he had the yeasty characteristics that I would have expected.

S: Cool. That's what we want to do.

B: So you are going to do one of those? For like the summertime, I guess.

S: Oh yeah. Come June...should be online. Well, it's right behind the brown ale, as soon as the brown ale's done.

B: What did you have at Christmas time? It was like a cherry stout, er...?

S: We had our Christmas beer.

B: Was that a cherry stout?

S: No. You know my Christmas beer. You've had it. My Christmas Ale. Like Anchor. It's like Anchor Christmas Ale.

B: Spice and everything.

S: Yeah. Got cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, orange peel....

B: Well, didn't you do something fruited though?

S: No, no. na-ah.

B: You never did anything fruited?

S: Not as a professional. I've done it as a homebrewer.

B: Yeah, well I meant right there at the brewery. I don't know why I was thinking

that. I guess maybe we were mixing....okay, we mixed one of your beers with Celis.

That's what I was thinking of.

S: Right, right. We mix Celis and the stout to make a Captain Ned.

B: Captain Ned. Yeah. That's right, 'cause you guys were clueing me in as to where that all came from, from Belushi and everything.

S: Yeah. Saturday Night Live.

B: Hey, you know I think I asked you this before....and I always thought this from way back in the homebrew club days. And then I think....you told me recently that I was totally wrong on your origins. I always thought you and Steve [Daniel] came down from Cincinnati together.

S: Well, sort of. I came down here and then Steve came down three months later.

B: But you knew each other in Cincinnati.

S: Oh yeah. We grew up together. We been partying and drinking beer since we were 15, 16 years old. We were talking just the other day, thinking back on it....even back then when all you could get was Grolsch and Heineken....and even as young punk kids, I mean, whenever we could afford it, we'd get good beer, even before anybody knew what good beer was. So we look at that and say, wow, I wonder if we were just destined to....genetically a...

B: Got the good beer gene.

S: Born to brew beer or be a beer person 'cause we did it even back when we were young kids.

B: When did you start brewing though?

S: Steve and I brewed our very first batch back in 1979, together. We brewed one batch together.

B: Were you in Houston then?

S: We were in Cincinnati. And then we looked up Scott in 1982. We got here in 1981.

B: So you guys are original Foam Rangers members?

S: Yeah. We're one of the....I mean, John Adams is the only one that I know that's older than we are.

B: 'Cause I remember...we were talking about that last night at the Gingerman...you know, DeFalco's is gone and they're building that funky deck on top and all this stuff and they gutted the inside....

S: They did? On DeFalco's?

B: Oh, you wouldn't believe it if you saw it.

S: Shame.

B: And what Jeff was telling me is this lady who owns the building and thinks she's going to stick a pub restaurant thing right there. And she's did all this construction and she never bothered getting any permits for anything. And the amazing thing is we all know that building is the biggest hunk of crap and it would be more productive to bulldoze it and start over.

S: It really would. And maybe make more money making a parking lot out of it.

B: And there's a brewpub opening up across the street from the Gingerman.

S: Yeah, I heard about that. When are they going to open?

B: Jeff was telling me about that yesterday

when I was interviewing him. He said a....

S: It's called Two Rows, I think. It's part of a chain.

B: Yeah, it's out of Dallas. And on the second story, like near the corner, right there at Morningside and University.

S: Yeah? Oh man.

B: Yeah, I don't know. I mean, they're real pricks about letting you park over there and they got those dweebs running around in golf carts towing people away. The whole thing's a mess.

S: Taking the whole ambiance away from that area, you know?

B: It's in turmoil right now. I never know what to expect when I go over there. But I was telling them last night at the Gingerman...I remember when I first started coming over to the Gingerman, my first...I went to a Foam Ranger meeting... those meetings were in the back of the Gingerman.

S: That's back when it was good.

B: Man, to have a homebrew club meeting at a bar. What a concept. You know, similar themes and things. That was the good old days.

S: It really was. It's going to be sad to drive by there and see DeFalco's isn't, I mean, that's just life, you know? Change, and it's not always good.

B: Have you been to their new place?

S: I was there before Scott opened and he showed me around. I haven't been back up since he opened.

B: It's pretty neat though. It's like a....

S: It's like DeFalco's of the 90's, you know? I told Scott, you're really...boy this is up town. I told him....you know what I see....as an artist, what I see on that third floor...I think he needs to put in like a little beer museum.

B: Third floor?

S: Third floor.

B: What third floor?

S: There's a third floor.

B: Well, I know in the back they got that add-on with that squared out atrium with a staircase winding up it.

S: Yeah, that's upstairs.

B: Is there another level on top of that?

S: I thought there was. But anyway, I told him he needs to put an art museum, a beer museum up there. Get people to donate stuff. But what I think you should do is take each wall and explain about the origin of beer. The history of beer. Start off on one wall, where it comes from. Mesopotamians making beer bread on a rock, go into that and then go into the medieval times and then go to the other wall and go into pre-prohibition and post-prohibition...and then the renaissance of the brewing industry, like what it's like right now.

B: It could be a regular Smithsonian.

S: Oh yeah. You could educate people.

B: And I'm sure Scott's got a lot of like, old homebrewing gizmo's that you don't use anymore. You could have like, little things from the past.

S: A lot of people would donate shit. I know I

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got things I would donate to that. I just think it would be a draw. People would go there just to see that.

B: Well, I think it's a pretty good idea.

S: And he's not using that space. So beat on him really hard to do that. He thought it was a great idea.

B: Well, I'm going to go look at it. I didn't even realize that space was there.

S: Like as an artist....I would like to get your opinion on that. That's what I see when I walk up there. It hit me with a ton of bricks. It's like, Scott, this is great. This looks like an art museum up here on the top. You ought to make this into like a little beer museum and talk about the history of beer. Educate people. It's all of our jobs. People want that. I talked in front of Kiwanis club meeting the other day. I'm getting invited to speak in all these different groups. Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis and I talked about the history of beer. What happened to kill beer in America. Basically, telling them how it's being brought back. And people just eat it up man. They love it. They want to know. They're hungry [or thirsty]. They want to know about beer.

B: Yeah.

S: Beer is a cool subject. People want to talk about it.

B: There's a lot more to it than they realize.

S: Yeah, there is.

B: Well, next week I'm going in there to buy a starter kit for my dad and while I'm there I'll investigate that third floor for myself.

S: Throw your two cents in if you agree with me.

B: Yeah. I'll take a look and see what hits me when I walk up there. Sounds interesting though. Sounds like a great idea to me.

S: And it could do nothing but help his business.

B: So anyway, you guys started in the club in '82. That's what you were saying.

S: Yeah.

B: So you guys were definitely some of the long, long term members. I mean, you guys were the regulars when I started out.

S: Yep, yep, we....I think we were there for the very first Dixie Cup.

B: You guys were pretty much.... I know Steve was like the American Light specialist, although you were damn good at that too.

S: I won first place in....what happened with me and Steve, we were talking about this the other day. Him and I brewed a couple of batches together and we're pretty competitive and we went off our separate ways and we would enter contests and do things and a....

B: ...Compete against each other.

S: ...against each other, but help each other. Be competitive. So we both went off in different directions and both of us....a lot of people think Steve went off and primarily did lagers...and I guess he did, but one year he won American Light, so the next year I entered an American Light and beat him, first place at the Dixie Cup. I brewed a lot of lagers myself. I won bock two years ago.

The bock category. Darrell Richman judged that and he wrote the book on bock beer. So, Steve and I have both...I mean, we've kind of been competitive and now we're brewing together so it's like, you've got these two good brewers with a lot of energy doing this thing and we're brewing together more than we ever did as a homebrewer.

B: I imagine it ought to be quite a treat and a lot of fun.

S: It is.

B: For things to have turned out the way they did.

S: Yeah. It's pretty much...it's, it's going... ..artistically it's rewarding.

B: I mean, I guess you guys want this to greatly succeed and this will be....are you planning on expanding if you ever can or do you want to just build it up and stay right there?

S: Ah, you know. It's too early to tell anything. We got to crawl before we can even walk. We all in the brewpub industry and microbrewery industry, we got a long way to go man. You got a lot of education to do out here. This is bubbaville still.



B: Yeah, when I was talking to Tim, those guys got all kinds of grandiose plans. I mean, I was shocked to hear that they were talking about having six or seven brewpubs in the Houston area. And I thought that sounded a little ridiculous.

S: But you know what? They've done a lot of talk and as long as they keep flatlining. They're not making any money yet.

B: I thought that was really kind of a....like you said, running before you can walk.

S: I'm not going to start talking about anything until I've paid this thing off. Start making money and then we'll talk about something like that. Shit. You know? In Denver it took ten years for them to do that. It took ten whole years for them to get knowledgeable and educated.

B: Yeah. You got to educate the entire community.

S: It took five or six before people really

knew what the heck's going on. It takes time. I talked to Gina Day a few years ago. She owns Rock Bottom and the Boulder Brewery... all kinds of other places. She's the one who told me that. She said in Denver, the first three or four years they just flatlined on everything. They wasn't losing money, they wasn't making money. And that's what the Houston Brewery is doing. That's what we're doing. We pay our bills but we're not making any money yet.

B: But I guess that's good though.

S: Oh yeah, we're doing great according to everybody. If you can pay your bills, especially in the winter in Galveston, you're doing good. But I'm, you know, you just got to wait it out. Lou [Carrannante] was telling me...he said this....and I remember this too, the first year or two that you walked into the Gingerman...he said there wasn't anybody at all. As a BAR it takes time. As a brewery or a brewpub it takes time.

B: Well, you'll just see it blossom over time. It will be rewarding.

S: And a...Tim and those guys, they're doing great, but they got to sell a lot of beer to pay for that...I mean, theirs is a huge, huge expense.

B: Yeah, no doubt. I guess it just....unless you get lucky and hit the right place at the right time and hit the ground running. But you can't plan on that.

S: No.

B: With your and Steve's experience, I definitely knew, you know, you guys are definitely going to brew good beer, so I mean, you're not going to....whatever happens, it's not going to be because the beer was no good.

S: Yeah, yeah. And a....so far, so good. Everything's going right on schedule. Right on plan.

B: Did Steve manage to not break any more carboys full of yeast?

S: Ah, he hadn't done that in awhile.

B: (Laughs) Has he got a handle on that?

S: I've got him talked out of doing that and using soda kegs.

B: Ah, there you go. Hey, is there anything particular you want me to mention for the next newsletter? **S:** Uh, that we're going to be taking beer to Jennings. I don't know. When's the newsletter going to be out?

B: Oh....like a....beginning of the second week of May probably or the end of the first week. I mean, in March, when I had my homebrew club meeting...he got that newsletter out really late. It was unusual for him. But then this one came out....you know, two weeks before the meeting, so....and he's been doing that regular. Barring anything else, it should come out a couple of weeks before the middle of the month.

S: Okay. You might just say that we're going to go to Jennings. That we're probably going to take some of our homebrew, which is very similar to the Big John Oatmeal Stout at the Galveston Brewery.

B: So you and Bonnie are going to that?

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S: Yeah. And Steve too. Steve and Tina.
B: So you guys got some managers or something that you can count on.
S: Yeah. Ah...I don't know if I'd go that far... but we do. (I laugh). Pretty much.
B: You can leave the place for a weekend though, huh?
S: Yeah.
B: I figured it'd be a ball and chain.
S: Well, it is, but a...you don't want to do it too often. Actually, that will be the first weekend we've left them. They can handle it.
B: You need to get out and have some fun. You guys have been working hard.
S: Yeah. But that's the thing. Tell them we're going to be there to pour in that event. And a...if you can, work up a little ad, basically saying what we do. And if you can get somebody to design a little billfold style...a little billfold sized card....and if any Foam Ranger presents that at any time they can get happy hour prices all the time.
B: Okay, so just like a little credit card with your logo on it.
S: Yep. A little I.D. card. We can call it....ah what can we call it? Galveston Brewery a...V.I.P.
B: Can they xerox it so they don't have to cut the brewsletter up, er...
S: Well, yeah, they can xerox it and then get it laminated. Just say Foam Rangers V.I.P., Galveston Brewery Foam Rangers V.I.P Discount Card or something like that. And just explain what it does.

B: Well they should just bring their newsletter. We'll have that little thing in there and say, bring this to the Galveston Brewery and get happy hour prices.
S: Anytime.
B: Well, that will make a lot of Foam Rangers real happy.
S: Yeah.
B: And a little added bonus for being a Foam Ranger.
S: Exactly.
B: Sounds good to me. Well hey Steve, I know you're busy, I'll let you get back to it.
S: Oh Buck, thanks a lot.
B: The deadline for the Brewsletter came like a week or two after my homebrew club meeting and I was just...too much going on to jump right in and get this going. But I'm going to try and get my butt in gear and get it all put together for the next one. I don't want too much time to elapse, you know? [Is 15 years too much?]
S: Well we appreciate it. We're always ready to be there....part of my club, man. That's still my club.
B: Well, I know you guys are definitely real conscientious about that sort of thing and got a lot of loyalty to your alma mater there.
S: If it wasn't for Scott Birdwell and the Foam Rangers, I wouldn't be where I am today. Put us on the path to making good beerand the group...that's what's even more important, I think, is the people I've met through the club. The friends....just the life long friends that you connect with.

B: Yeah, you can't put a measurement on that.
S: No, you can't. I will never stop being a Foam Ranger. Great club.
B: Yeah. I agree. Scott has put a lot of souls on the path to righteousness.
S: Great guy, man. He's very....he deserves anything good that ever comes his way.
B: [Chuckles] And he doesn't deserve some of the things that have come his way.
S: Yeah, I know, but then again, that's life.
B: That's true. Well, good luck to you all.
S: You too. Bye.

PS: Read Michael Jackson's review of the Galveston Brewery at <http://www.beerhunter.com/documents/19133-000093.html>

There has been much speculation about the demise of brewpubs in Houston. Well, now you know. It's all my fault. By not publishing the Foam Rangers VIP card, the Galveston Brewery folded from lack of support. The shock waves brought the remaining Houston area brewpubs down in domino fashion. For that (and my role in 9/11) I do apologize!



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