

# Basin Brewers

*December 2009 newsletter*

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*Responsibly promoting craft beer since 1994*



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## **Hoppy Homebrewdays!!!**

Wow! I don't know about you but I'm still stuffed full of turkey, dressing, pumpkin pie and all other sorts of goodies! So that must mean the "Holidaze" are already upon us and we better get into high gear on our Christmas shopping! Just a quick reminder of the true meaning of the season...that's right Christmas and Holiday brews! Hopefully everyone will be pulling off a fine elixir out of the fermentation vessels and will remember their giving spirit and send me a bomber or two! That's right...P to the 6<sup>th</sup> power reigns on the Turner brewing schedule baby. What's P to the 6<sup>th</sup> you may ask? A simple acronym my dear friends from my old military days; Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance! I am truly ashamed of myself; however, I will make a run to The Cellar and The Wine Rack and attempt to console myself, or drown my sorrows for my short comings this year. God bless you all and brew strong this New Year!

## **December Beer Meeting!**

The Evite is already out and our next beer meeting will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December at Adam and Emily's apartment; Windscape Apartments, 3609 Caldera Blvd., Apartment #133. Adam is currently trying to lighten his beer stash before the move and has generously volunteered his place.

Remember we will also be electing next year's officers for the club. SO if you can't attend and would like to make a nomination, just contact Aaron, Gil or the guys and we'll put them on the ballot! Of course, even if you don't show up or let us know your choice...you may show up on the ballot anyway! Bwahahahaha!

## **And Now, A Word from the Primary Fermentor!**

By Aaron Pachlhofer



Well Basin Brewers, here we are at the end of 2009, and what a year it has been! We kicked off the year with a brew day at Gary's office, which was attended by a photographer from the Midland Reporter Telegram. Next, the club got a full page profile in the April 5, 2009 Midland Reporter-Telegram, featuring the photos taken at Gary's office. After that we presented a tour de force at the Commemorative Air Force Hops and Props. Following was the Basin Brewer Pale Ale brew-off also in April. Then we had a large turn out for Big Brew in May with lots of beer brewed in Gil's garage. To top that, we had a double whammy: the Belgian Brewoff and the now infamous Lobster Boil/Jam (wear a helmet...). Then there was the kegerator crawl, which turned out to be far better a good time than anyone could have imagined, though I don't remember that

much of it. I am so glad to see that the club is quickly regaining the active participation that it had in the past. Now as we close out the year, we will gather one last time in 2009 to toast such a great year. When we do, we will prepare for next year by conducting elections for next year. We will also wish Adam and Emily farewell and Godspeed as they prepare to move to Louisiana, where I am sure Adam will continue to make a positive impact for homebrewers there as he has here. Finally, it is time to introduce something for December: Brewer of the Year! We will go over the rules and points, and this year's winner at the meeting. So I look forward to hoisting a holiday brew with you as we spread some Christmas cheer. And get ready for next year...we will have a helluva good time.

Yours in Foam,  
Aaron Pachlhofer

## **Rate that Brew! Or, Beer Snob of the Month!**

By Gary W. Turner

Okay guys, seeing how we did not have a November meeting I have selflessly volunteered my services to do this month's beer rating.

This month's beer is Fredericksburg Brewery's **Jailhouse Bock** that they tapped into the day before Thanksgiving! Thanks Jeff!

**Appearance (0-3):** Beautifully clear dark copper coloring with only light carbonation and a small head that quickly dissipates! Of course this is from a growler three days after the fact, but it really should be a tad bit foamier. **1 point**

**Aroma/Bouquet (0-4):** Nice malt aroma with a slight roastiness in the nose. No hop or alcohol aroma. Bready!? **3 points**

### **Taste:**

*Hop/malt balance (0-4):* The maltiness is fairly complex with a slight caramel taste and a touch of roastiness. There is a little sweet flavor that lingers in the background.

Mmmm Bocky!!!! **3 points**

*Aftertaste (0-3):* Nice sweet finish you would expect from a bock! The roast flavor I think balances everything together. **2 points**

*Mouthfeel (0-3):* Medium to low mouthfeel, very mellow with low carbonation which is proper for the style. **3 points**

**Overall Impression (0-3):** I love bocks and this is a delicious example of the style.

There is really no alcoholic warmth, but I believe it is an ambush in the waiting! Just when you think the trail is clear....WHAM you could be blitzed! **3 points**

**Total: 15 points**

Fredericksburg Brewery is a great place to go and enjoy a brew or two while the significant other is out running up the plastic. Be sure to visit there anytime you are in the Hill Country. However, don't bother going to their website! It's a little bland and not very informative at all. But when you get the traffic through there that Fredericksburg does....why bother!!!

### **NOTE FROM EDITOR**

The previous article is the second of series of beer ratings that will be judged by you....our loving readers! At each meeting a name will be drawn out of the hat and you will have the opportunity to become "THE BEER SNOB OF THE MONTH!" Failure to comply will result in your forcibly drinking of a commercially available light swill from an Über Brewery....of whose name we shan't mention here! Yea verily.....

## **BOTM**

By Aaron Pachlhofer

Christmas beers....

As the weather cools, the leaves fall from the trees and the neighborhood lights up in a colorful display of twinkling lights; our minds drift away from work and to the holidays: Visions of excited children, in-laws, piles of shredded wrapping paper, and expanding waistlines dominate our thoughts...yup, it is Christmas time again. As brewers and beer aficionados, this is a special time of year for us...let me explain: During the holidays, everyone and their uncle who makes any sort of commercial food or drink product has a special holiday edition or gift package; but typically >95% of the time, these items are the same product in a shiny special package—even those who distill spirits or vint wine. But craft brewers and homebrewers are very different; every year for Christmas, they pull out the stops to create something special to celebrate the holiday season...Christmas beers. A Christmas beer typically represents the brewer's best and most creative fermentation effort for the year. Beer fans everywhere look forward to these examples of liquid holiday spirit every late fall and winter.

Christmas beers are difficult to describe because there are not defined guidelines like an IPA, a stout, or a pilsner in either the BJCP or the AHA beer descriptions. The reason is that most Christmas beers are based on other beer recipes or are imperialized versions. Many brewers change their Christmas beer recipes every year. In some cases an imperial stout or an imperial IPA may be offered as a Christmas beer. There is no limit to what can be labeled as a Christmas beer...literally anything goes. The best way to describe a Christmas beer is a Strong, amber to dark

brown, rich malty ale. It may or may not have spices added to it.

In the BJCP guidelines, categories 16E – Belgian Specialty ale, 19A – Old Ale, 21B – Christmas/Winter Specialty Spiced Beer, 22C – Wood Aged Beer, and 23 – Specialty Beer can all apply to the various incarnations of Christmas beer. In a future revision of the BJCP guidelines, an addition for a broad Christmas beer category appears necessary. Perhaps to Category 23 – Specialty Beer, since the best broad definition of a Christmas beer is a specialty beer.

There are a few general characteristics that may define most Christmas beers:

1. Ale. Most Christmas Beers are ales...there a few are lagers (mostly European examples), but the vast majority are ales.
2. Rich and Strong. Rich maltiness, lots of flavor, and elevated alcohol content are hallmarks of most Christmas beers. Most often Christmas beers are made for savoring, not quaffing.
3. Dark, not pale. In keeping with a rich malty flavor, most Christmas beers are amber or dark brown in color, or even black as an imperial stout.
4. Spiced. A primary hallmark of the holiday season is the rich, wonderfully spiced traditional foods, snacks and deserts. Christmas beers are no different and a considerable most Christmas beers are spiced.

It is interesting to note that many Christmas beers are spiced, but there are just as many that are not spiced. Some Christmas beers may rely solely on fermentables for flavor

and no spiced character is intended in the beer, such as a beer styled after an old ale or a barley wine. In some cases the beer may have a spiced character that is from the strain of yeast, as in many Belgian styled Christmas beers. Alternatively Christmas beers may feature may feature hops, fruit, dark or specialty sugars, chocolate, aged on oak, wild yeast or bacteria strains, or some other exotic ingredient. Additionally, some Christmas beer may experience significant aging prior to be judged ready to drink by the brewer.

Christmas beers are subject to wide interpretation and variability. But one thing is for sure, when a brewer makes a Christmas beer available, it will certainly be a once a year treat.

## Recipe of the Month

December's Beer of the Month is Christmas and Celebration Beers! This month's beer recipe is our own Aaron Pachlhofer's 2008 Cactus Challenge winner in the Wood Aged Beer Category, "Old Sugar Plum!"

15 lbs 2-row  
1.5 lbs Munich 10L  
1 lb Biscuit  
1 lb Melanoiden  
1 lb Oats  
1 lb victory  
.5 lb Crystal 40  
.5 lb Crystal 90  
.5 lb Honey malt  
.15 lb chocolate malt 350L  
2 lbs Piloncillo sugar, chopped fine  
1 oz Simcoe (13.2% AA) at 60 minutes  
1 oz Amarillo (6.9% AA) at 30 minutes  
1 oz Cascade (6.9% AA) at 10 minutes  
4 oz oak chips-medium toast for two weeks in secondary.  
Wyeast 1056 yeast cake  
15.5 gallon kettle

*Method:* Use one pound of 2-row with the pound of oats and perform a beta-gluconase rest at 120 to 125F for 20 minutes on your stove top with about 1.5 quarts of water. Following the beta gluconase rest, heat at least 6 gallons of water and mash in at 150F, maintaining a thick mash. Allow to mash for two hours. Once conversion is complete, raise mash temperature to 165F for a mash out, and hold for 15 to 20 minutes (allows greater gelatinization of sugars). Sparge with 7 gallons of water, collecting as much wort as possible in the kettle, but do not over sparge the grains. Bring wort to a slow boil. Boil the wort down under your normal starting volume is reached, then knock the ice off the propane tank, and add the 60 minute hop addition and begin timing the boil, and add the remaining hops at the specified times. Add the piloncillo in the final 10 minutes. Add carefully so it dissolves, and does not become a burnt black mass at the bottom of the kettle. Cool and drain to Fermentor. You must use a yeast cake for this beer, or pitch several packages of yeast. Primary for at least three weeks, then test gravity, allow to remain in primary longer if necessary. Rack to secondary, and after two weeks sanitize the oak chips by steaming for 10 minutes, then add to secondary for an additional two weeks. Rack into a keg and force carbonate. Keg condition for at least four months then bottle.

Note that this recipe is not for the faint of heart. In late April 2007, I brewed this beer. Following the monster mash, I boiled the wort four approximately four hours, and froze the tank in the process. This beer fermented for two months before being kegged (my first ever!), then it was kept there for several months, because the beer was just not ready to be bottled, but also because I did not have a beer gun to bottle it. It would have been ready to bottle around December, but since I did not have anything to bottle with...and trust me; a bottling wand

and low CO2 pressure won't cut it. Once I got hold of a beer gun, the beer was bottled in February, and then held until Christmas 2008....this beer was a 1 1/2 year odyssey. I thought they were gone, but I recently found a few, so we will try some now 2.5 year old ale at the next meeting.

The Numbers  
SRM - 22.9  
IBU - 31.6  
O.G. - 1.142  
F.G. - 1.038  
ABV - 13.6%

## Membership Information

MEMBERSHIP is open to anybody who enjoys quality craft beer and can come up with \$24 per year. If you're interested contact one of the officers listed above!

Perks include sampling homebrew and micro brews, club mugs and t-shirts, discounts on grain & hops, free copies of Southwest Brewing News, and a friendly atmosphere.

## Brew of the Month List

January: Brown ale/porter  
February: Doppelbock  
March: Saisons  
April: Pale Ale  
May: Wheat / Wit / Weizen  
June: IPA  
July: Pilsners/ Lager / Kolsch  
August: Anything Belgian  
September: Stouts & Porters  
October: Oktoberfest / Bocks  
November: Barley wines & big beers & anything odd  
**December: Xmas / Celebration Beers**

## Basin Brewer Officers

**Primary Fermentor:** Aaron Pachlhofer  
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**Secondary Fermentor:** Tom Elliott  
<Thomas\_e\_elliott@hotmail.com>

**Treasurer:** Gil Van Deventer  
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**Secretary/ editor:** Adam English  
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