

Basin Brewers

February 2009 newsletter

Responsibly promoting craft beer since 1994



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Basin Brewer meets Spoetzl (Shiner) brewer... with foamy results

Long-term Basin Brewer member Gil Van Deventer recently visited the Spoetzl Brewery where he got to sample a commemorative brew and meet their Lab QC manager

By Gil Van Deventer

THE Spoetzl (a.k.a. Shiner) Brewery recently unveiled "Commemorator," a celebratory brew marking their 100-year anniversary. *Commemorator* is a Doppelbock brewed in the robust classic German 'stark' style with an ABV of 6.7%. I had higher expectations for this beer but I suppose it is appropriately styled as a stronger version of their most popular brew - *Shiner Bock*.

While at the brewery I offered them a sample of my Brown Ale, which earned me an extra trip upstairs to the lab where I met Peter Takacs, the Lab QC Manager. He informed me that my brown ale was under-carbonated (amongst other constructive criticisms).

Peter shared some interesting history concerning the Spoetzl yeast. They use only one strain and it is not the American Ale yeast that came from Budweiser or San Francisco. Instead it is a strain that Kosmos Spoetzl

obtained from Pearl Brewing Co (San Antonio) back in the day. According to Peter, the origin of the yeast before Pearl got their hands on it was from Pennsylvania and went by the name of *Smith*. He said the Budweiser and Smith strains were the only two strains available back then. Peter wouldn't let me take any yeast back with me but acknowledged that I could harvest my own from their bottle-fermented Heffeweisen. Like a good Spoetzl soldier Peter did not give up any recipes.

I collected many Shiner mementos including *Shine On* by Mike Renfro: an excellent book that chronicles the 100-year history of this brewery.

The Spoetzl Brewery is sponsoring their annual *Great Austin to Shiner Pedal* (GASP) cycling event coming up on May 2nd. This sounds like a fun event but unfortunately it conflicts with the National Homebrew Day, which is also the first Saturday in May.



Spoetzl Brewery

Homebrewing for Dummies A Reference for the Rest of Us! By Marty Nachel (Book Review)

By Adam English

LIKE many people who dive into the world of home brewing the concept was intimidating at first, but like many books from the “Dummies” series *Homebrewing for Dummies: A reference for the rest of us!* proved to be delightful helping hand.

Homebrewing for Dummies is a comprehensive guide that efficiently takes the home brewer from start (buying equipment) to finish (drinking the beer). While skimming the first couple chapters in the bookstore I learned exactly what equipment I needed before I even bought the book. My first brew followed the book’s directions to the letter and was a success. Since then, whenever I had a question along the brewing way I always turned to this book for the answers. The book is written in the characteristic bullet format of the Dummies series, making descriptions of processes such as kegging your home brew or mashing grains very easy to follow.

The recipe chapter is very effective and distinguishes *Homebrewing for Dummies* from other home brewing books. Chapter 14 includes two sample recipes per beer style, most of which were competition award winners. The two sample recipes include an “intermediate” recipe and an “advanced” recipe. The intermediate recipe is extract-based (malt sugar is aquired pre-extracted) while the advanced recipe is all-grain based (brewer extracts his/her own malt sugar from base grains). I keep going back to this book to derive my own style recipes by mixing and matching different recipe elements. Each beer style section also includes descriptions of what the style is supposed to taste, look, and smell like so you can adjust your recipes accordingly.

Homebrewing for Dummies was written by Marty Nachel, writer for the Beer Across America newsletter and co- author of Beer for Dummies.

Marty Nachel (1997). *Homebrewing for Dummies: A Reference for the Rest of Us*. New York, NY: Wiley Publishing, Inc.. 399 p

Deals and Free Stuff!

Inexpensive glass carboys

Courtesy of Aaron Pachlhofer

GLASS carboys are the preferred fermentation vessels of home brewers but have become increasingly hard to come by and expensive. E-bay dealer “gulfcoastliquidators” is currently selling 7.5 gal glass carboys in the \$35 range, which is not beatable. If you are getting into home brewing or need to replace your plastic you should check this out!

Brew Sculpture Giveaway

Courtesy of Manny Ortiz

See:

http://morebeer.com/search/103548/beerwinecoffee/coffeewinebeer/Social_Network_Contest

Kegging System Raffle

Courtesy of Manny Ortiz

Kegging system raffle through Brewing Network. Go to brewingnetwork.com and hit the donate button. For every \$5 you donate you get one raffle ticket for more beer's KEG400 kit. It includes a regulator, tank, hoses, connections and 5 gallon corny.

Check it out:

<http://morebeer.com/search?search=keg400>

The money is to support their free website with great content.

Upcoming Events

- **TBA Basin Brewer meetings:** see member info on last page

- **The Blue Bonnet Brew Off:** one of the largest single- site brewing events in the United States, kicks off the Lone Star Circuit. Typically up to 1100 entries with 300– 400 participants.

The Bluebonnet Brew-off competition dates are as follows:

- 1/1/2009 – 2/26/2009 - Accepting Entries
- 3/7/2009 – 3/8/2009 - Judging
- 3/14/2009 – 3/15/2009 - Judging
- 3/20/2009 – 3/21/2009 - Bluebonnet Brew-off 2009

- **Great Austin to Shiner Pedal (GASP):** bicycle marathon sponsored by Shiner, May 2nd

- **National Homebrew Day:** national day of home brewing recognition when as many brewers gather in the same place as possible and brew as much beer as possible. The Basin Brewers brewed 35 gallons in a club member's garage last year! May 2nd.

Recipe of the Month

Amapola Agave Wheat (3rd place 2008 Cactus Challenge)

By Manny Ortiz

This a great summer time brew, I made two batches last year, one with spices and one with the agave wheat. The one with Agave

wheat was better in my opinion, very clean and thirst quenching. →

Style: American Wheat

O.G.: 1.047

F.G.: 1.011

SRM: 3.9

IBU: 24

ABV: 4.69

Grain:

4.0 lbs Wheat, flaked

3.0 lbs IdaPils (Cargil) Pilsner Malt

1.0 lb Wheat Malt

0.5 lb CaraPils

0.25 lb Caramel Malt 20L

0.25 lb Munich

Hops:

0.75 lb Amarillo Gold 8.5% 60M

0.25 lb Amarillo Gold 8.5% 5M

1.0 lb Agave Nectar (last 15M of boil)

Yeast:

Wyeast 3944 Belgian Witbier

Notes:

Mash @ 154 for 60M

Boil for 90M

Ferment @ 68F for 8-10 days

Who are the Basin Brewers?

THE Basin Brewers Club was established in 1994 to promote craft beer in the Midland/Odessa area. Most members are home brewers who are proud to share their creations, however, brewing is not a prerequisite. Other members include connoisseurs of quality beer and spouses tolerant of our hobby.

Group events typically consist of public meetings at local bars, meetings at club member's homes, and participation in regional and national home brewing

competitions. Basin Brewers recently won two 1st place (Gary Turner's *Willy's Wit*; Aaron Pachlhofer's *Old Sugar Plum*) and two 3rd place awards (brews by Manny Ortiz and Aaron) in the Cactus Challenge competition in Lubbock, TX.

Notes from Last Basin Brewer's Meeting on Jan. 10th

By Adam English

MUCH fun was had on Gil's patio where this year's officers were elected and several club-generated homebrews sampled. The highlight was a review of smoked porters inspired by Gil's recent work with the style. Sampled smoked porters included *Stone Smoked Porter* (not so smoky), *Alaskan Smoked Porter* (smokier, deemed appropriate), and Gil's beast of a smoked porter (dangerously smoky).

Basin Brewers Officers

Primary Fermentor: Aaron Pachlhofer
<pachlhofers@yahoo.com>

Secondary Fermentor: Tom Elliot
<thomas_e_elliott@hotmail.com>

Treasurer: Gil Van Deventer
<gilbertvandeventer@suddenlink.net>

Secretary/ editor: Adam English
<English.91a@gmail.com>

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.