

Basin Brewers

July 2009 newsletter

Responsibly promoting craft beer since 1994



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Basin Brewer Website launched!

CHECK the Basin Brewers website for news, recipes, and other sorts of fun.

<http://www.basinbrewers.org/>

Brewing in Kent's Barn

THE Basin Brewers met at Kent Gantz's barn last month to participate with some home brewing of Belgian Wit. A few showed up early to participate with the whole process, while the rest of us trickled in later for the "official" meeting. The highlight was the severe thunderstorm that came through during the brewing, which the Basin Brewers rode out with un-daunted courage and brewing dedication. We had a good turn out with over 15 people, horse shoes, and excellent food provided by the Gantz!

Next Meeting: July 11th

Meeting: 7:00 PM

Host: Tom Elliot

Tom's Barn
2803 West Michigan
Midland, TX

Blow-off hoses

Something every home brewer better be ready to do

By Adam English

BOOM! a carboy explodes in the basement and Susan and Mark English decide to give up home brewing after grueling cleanup of sticky wort and dead yeast. The only plus side of this event was I inherited most of their equipment. But yes, home brews can explode and it happens when excessively energetic fermentation drives the foam (i.e., krausen) all the way to the airlock which gets clogged and unable to release pressure. If an airlock gets clogged one of two things will happen: 1) the airlock pops off and foam spews all over the place, or worse 2) the glass carboy shatters and everything explodes all over the place (#2 happened to my parents). Because of my parent's experience I always have the primary fermentor in the guest bathtub incase anything happens.

Using a blow-off hose of > 3/8" diameter eliminates any explosion risks. For instance, yesterday I brewed a Barleywine with OG= 1.089, fermentation started just a few hours after pitching a massive starter of Wyeast Irish Ale yeast. Late last night I checked the beer and the foam was just a few inches from the airlock. Fortunately I had a 1/2"-diameter hose on hand and utilized it as a blow off. Shortly after switching out the

airlock with the hose the foam was squirting up the hose and into my blow-off bucket. At that point an airlock would have been clogged and an explosion hazard.

I set up a blow-off by wrapping tape around a 1/2" diameter clear plastic hose until it fits snugly in the carboy opening, and put the other end in a bottle or bucket full of water. I also use keg o-ring lubricant to get a better seal (you can probably substitute with vasoline).

Beers that may require a blow-off are often a combination of high gravity and certain types of yeast. I've been motivated to apply the blow-off with beers > 1.075 gravity while using Irish Ale (twice) and Belgian Strong yeast (once). My parents' explosive beer that should have used a blow-off utilized Scottish Ale yeast.



Barley Wine with blow-off applied just before the foam reached the airlock. By 3am the foam had overflowed the blow-off bottle (right) which got switched out with the priming bucket.

Brew of the Month: Pilsner

By Aaron Pachlhofer

IN terms of beer styles, Pilsner or Pils is a relative newcomer to the beer family as a type of pale lager. The pilsner was invented in Pilsen, Bohemia in 1842. Until the mid-

1840's, Bohemian beers were dark and cloudy. The quality often varied, and consumers were even known to dump whole barrels of beer into the streets to show their dissatisfaction. The citizens of Pilsen decided in 1839 to found and build a brewery of their own, called Bürger Brauerei (Citizens' Brewery). The brewery was to brew beer according to the Bavarian style, which used the newly available (to continental Europe) pale malts and a newly discovered strain of yeast that bottom ferments at cold temperatures. This style of beer was also to use a new technique* called "lager" a German word for storage. To ensure a good product, a Bavarian brewer named Josef Groll was recruited to brew at the new brewery. He presented his first batch on October 5, 1842.

* - Lagering as a new technique? At that time lagering was a new process. Amazing the way lagers took hold and held on....A.P.

The new pilsner was a remarkable beer, due to the very pale colored malt used, noble Saaz hops, the incredibly soft Pilsen water, and the new 'lagering' process. The resulting clear, golden beer was an overnight sensation. In combination with advances in transportation and communication, the new pilsner was soon available throughout Europe and the Pilsner Brauart style was soon copied by anyone who had the ability to do it. Saaz hops became such a guarded commodity that the Bohemian crown decreed that anyone caught trying to leave Bohemia with Saaz rhizomes would be put to death. "Pilsner Bier" was registered as a brand name at the Chamber of Commerce and Trade in Pilsen. In 1898, the Pilsner Urquell trademark, meaning 'the original pilsner source' was created to put emphasis on the original brewery. Although currently owned by SAB Miller, the Pilsner Urquell remains in operation, producing pilsner at

the original brewery, though there are now Pilsner Urquell breweries in Poland and Russia. With the invention and introduction of modern refrigeration methods in the late 1800s, the pilsner was able to be brewed in locations where temperatures made it impossible.

Since its introduction, Pilsner has joined other pale lagers in becoming the most popular type of beer in the world. Pilsners should not be confused with other pale lagers such as Heineken, Stella Artois, Budweiser, Coors, Miller, etc which are types of pale lager. Note that some brewers may label their pale lager as a pilsner to indicate their premium beer whether or not the beer has actually been brewed as a pilsner. Though pilsners and pale lagers belong to the same basic beer family, they are markedly different—most notably that a true pilsner is fairly hoppy!

According to the BJCP, there are three divisions to pilsners:

- 2A – German Pilsner
- 2B – Bohemian Pilsner
- 2C – Classic American Pilsner

A German Pilsner is straw to light gold and brilliantly clear with a creamy long lasting head and medium high carbonation. It features a light grainy malt character and has distinctive spicy or flowery noble hops. The beer should be clean with no fruity esters or diacetyl. The taste should be crisp and bitter with a dry to medium dry finish. Maltiness should be moderate to low and well attenuated. Hop bitterness dominate the taste through the finish, and hop flavor can range from low to high but should only be German noble hops.

O.G. 1.044 – 1.050, IBU 25 – 45, SRM 2 – 5.

Commercial examples: Victory Prima Pils, Bitburger, Warsteiner, Spaten, Left Hand Polestar Pilsner

Bohemian Pilsners (being the original) are the type example of what a pilsner should be. Appearing very pale gold to deep gold (more typical); Bohemian pilsners are brilliantly clear with a long lasting head with medium carbonation and mouthfeel. The aroma should be rich and complex with the spicy flavor of Saaz hops. In a Bohemian pils some diacetyl can be acceptable but does not have to be present. The flavor should again be rich and complex, with soft rounded bitterness from very soft water. The hop bitterness should be prominent but never harsh. Aftertaste should be balanced. The overall impression should be a crisp, complex, well rounded beer.

O.G. 1.044 – 1.056, IBU 35 – 46, SRM 3.5 – 6.

Commercial examples: Pilsner Urquell, Budweiser Budvar (Czechvar in the US), Staropramen.

The Classic American pilsner, like the other pilsners, should appear yellow to deep gold with a substantial long lasting head and bright clarity. Mouthfeel should be rich and creamy. The aroma should be of a clean lager character with medium to moderately high hop character, often of noble hops, though American varieties may be used. The flavor should be malty like German and Bohemian version, but may be somewhat light due to the use of adjuncts. Medium to high hop flavor from noble hops (either late addition or first-wort hopped). Hop bitterness should be medium to high, and should not be coarse or harsh. No fruitiness or diacetyl. It should be smooth and well-lagered.

O.G. 1.044 - 1.060, IBU 25 – 40, SRM 3 – 6.

Commercial examples: Generally found as a homebrew or a brewpub special.

The primary difference between German and Bohemian pilsners comes down to two

things: water and hops. German water is typically fairly hard; where as the water in Pilsen is extraordinarily soft. Where the German use a mixture of noble hops, the Czech brewers will use only Saaz. The German style is an evolution of the classic Bohemian style as they tried to copy the Czech brewers. In brewing these beers, decoction mashes are used by brewers of both styles of beer. When compared side by side, A German pils should be drier, lighter in color, more highly carbonated, with a more lingering hop bitterness in the aftertaste. Pilsner malt should be used in brewing both of these beers, and only noble hops are appropriate.

The Classic American Pilsner can stand up to the continental pilsners, but malt and hops native to the US were used by the immigrant brewers who needed a cold one. Since the American pilsner uses adjuncts (mainly maize), it will be similar to American lagers such as Coors, Miller, and Budweiser, but the malt and hops will set it apart from them. In addition, the use of maize will also set it apart, since most American lagers use rice as an adjunct. Six-row malt should be used in place of two-row. Classic American hops such as Cluster, traditional noble hops, or noble hops crosses (Ultra, Liberty, Crystal, etc) should be used. Modern, aggressive American hops such as Cascade, Centennial, or Amarillo are inappropriate.

Recipe of the Month:

*Darkness (Imperial Stout)
2nd Place, Bluebonnet 2009*

Brewer: Adam English

WE try to coordinate the Brew of the Month and Recipe of the Month, unfortunately the Basin Brewers do not seem to have any award-winning Pilsner recipes on hand, so it was suggested I use my Imperial Stout

recipe instead. This does make some sense, because now is about the time you want to brew your Imperial Stout if you want it to be ready for winter time!

Mini-mash: Seep 2 lb crystal 90, 1/2 lb Victory, 15 minutes at 155°F

Exchange grains in bag, seep 1/2 lb roasted barley, 1/2 lb chocolate malt, 1/2 lb Black Patent for 15 minutes at 155 °F

60 minute boil: 5 lbs amber DME, 4lbs dark DME, 1/2 lb dark brown sugar

Hop sequence: 1 oz Nugget (60min), 2 oz Cascade (30 min), 1 oz Cluster (10 min).

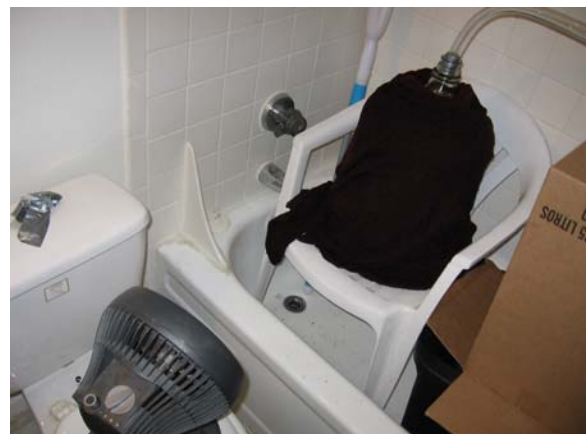
Wort chilled in ice bath

One week Primary, two weeks secondary fermentation at 72 °F (primary chilled to ~62 °F using wet towel + fan evaporation cooling)

Dry hopped with 1 oz Cascade in secondary
FG= 1.006 (8.1% abv)

OG= 1.102 (watered down to ~ 1.089 after 3 days of no fermentation)

FG= 1.030 (7.7% abv)



*Wet towel+ fan evaporation cooling of "Darkness":
drops carboy temperature ~ 10 °F*



*Basin Brewers celebrate National Homebrew Day at
Gil's*

Basin Brewer Officers

Primary Fermentor: Aaron Pachlhofer
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Secretary/ editor: Adam English
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Brew of the Month Schedule

July: Pilsner, Lager, Kolsch

August: Anything Belgian

September: Stout and Porter

October: Ocktoberfest and Bocks

November: Barley wines, big beers, and anything odd

December: Xmas and Celebration Beers

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.