

Rubber Chicken



February 2024

Beer Notes - Cider

Newbies (No Oldies this Month)

First question, what equipment do I need? Answer, pretty much what you use for beer! Next, what ingredients do I need? I used unpasteurized cider, but some recipes call for store bought apple juice. I follow Siciliano's on Facebook and got the message that they were having unpasteurized cider bulk delivery from Hills Bros Orchard and brought a five-gallon bucket to get the good stuff. Some "unique" ingredients are Camden, Pectic Enzyme, and Potassium Sorbate. I added Camden prior to fermentation to kill bacteria or natural yeasts. **Don't use an airlock!** I then hydrated my yeast (lots to choose from) in a flask with warm water for 20 minutes. I added the yeast and Pectic Enzyme to cider and let it ferment at room temperature for a couple of days then put it in garage (60 degrees or so) for two weeks. I transferred to a secondary fermenter and let it sit for at least a month. I took half the batch and wanted to make a traditional apple cider. For that half I did the following: I was not kegging yet and wanted to carbonate the cider, so I added a small amount of sugar before bottling. Just to be safe I put in my beer fridge to reduce the change of bottle bombs. They didn't carbonate much but didn't explode either. I just started kegging so I transferred the bottles to a keg and forced carb them. Nice dry cider with a few bubbles to make things interesting. For the other half I did the other following: I wanted to make a Fruit cider. I added Potassium Sorbate to kill any yeast. I wanted it to be sweet, so I took a small amount out and added some honey and cranberry concentrate to it and tasted it. Not as sweet as I wanted so I continued to add until I liked it. I took these amounts and adjusted to 2.5 gallons and added to the cider. I bottled them and they turned out pretty good. I might adjust before competition, but we will see. (Bill Smith)

*"How do you like them apples?"
Good Will Hunting*

C2B. Cider with other Fruit

March Beer/Cider Style

BJCP Guidelines: This is a cider with other fruits or fruit-juices added – for example, berry. This is the correct style to enter a beverage fermented from a combination of apple and pear juice.

Overall Impression: Like a white wine with complex flavors. The apple character must marry with the added fruit so that neither one dominates the other.

Commercial Examples: West County Blueberry-Apple Wine (MA), Bellwether Cherry Street (NY), Uncle John's Fruit Farm Winery Apple Cherry Hard Cider (MI), Uncle John's Fruit Farm Winery Apple Blueberry Hard Cider (MI), Uncle John's Fruit Farm Winery Apricot Apple Hard Cider (MI).

President's Letter February 2024

Many thanks to Bill Smith for resuscitating the 'Rubber Chicken' club newsletter. Please send him articles, photos, questions, appeals for help, whatever, to smithbi86@gmail.com or text 616-821-8156.

I think PrimeTime Brewers is in a good place; we had 30+ members last year, we're in the high 20's already this year, we've had good attendance at our first couple of meetings and there were 10 entries in January's Brewer of the Year competition. I think communications are improving - kudos to Bill and Mies for getting the best out of our website and, just like "free beer tomorrow", we're talking once again about a bus trip!

A quick recap of our **Annual Christmas Party and Fundraiser**. Dan & Tiff Sipka let us to use Siciliano's 'Half Way House' which was great. We had generous support from our sponsors and equipment donations from within the club, and raised over \$3,100 through the auction and raffle, of which we contributed \$1,600 to Feeding America West Michigan. So, our club coffers have had a nice boost. The potluck food was amazing and plentiful; well done everyone.

Siciliano's Homebrew Competition is just around the corner. Dates will be announced soon but most likely closing by end March, judging mid-April, and awards at Big Brew Day in early May. Drew Thiel says Siciliano's are upping their game, both registration and prizes, and be aware this will be the first opportunity to qualify for next year's ProAm, so keep an eye on their website: sicilianosmkt.com

Four of us (Greg, Bill, Ian & Ben) are awaiting results from the BJCP tasting exam in November - expected in another 3 months or so - but meantime we're 'Rank Pending' and we judged Kalamazoo's 'Keepers of Craft' homebrew club competition and the **10th Annual O'Connor's West Michigan Brew-Off**, where Greg Sanial and Chad Banks both scored gold medals and we had a few others too. Full results are at oconnors.brewingcompetitions.com. We'll do our best to judge PTB's monthly competition - not our own brews of course! - and if anyone else has a desire to develop their judging skills or sit the exam maybe we can persuade Matt Bair and Andrew Perry to do it again.

The West Michigan Brew-Off was the final chance to qualify for this year's **Pro-Am Competition** and it looks like there'll be six or seven PrimeTimers participating.

The **MBG Winter Beer Festival** is on February 24 at LMCU Ballpark, whatever the weather. Tickets are \$60 at mibeer.com Some suggested plans based on my own experience:

- begin with blondes and seek out reds and browns before engaging with the darker beers!
- start with the most Northerly brewery and work South
- focus on brewpubs that don't distribute
- always go for the shortest line, unless you MUST have a Founders or Shorts :)
- seek a style you don't know or the latest trend: Bruts, hazies, sours and white stouts have all had their moments; and hazies still do.
- don't bother to make notes, they'll soon be illegible
- watch out for BA imperial stouts, they're so good, but so bad for your intentions
- if one of your friends aims to drink from A to Z plus a few more - talk him out of it!

President's Letter February 2024

Lastly, I've been trying out a nifty little brew system called '**PINTER**' from a UK company of the same name. It was free, so why not? It's got to be the simplest way to make 12 pints of beer in a single vessel measuring about 10" diameter x 15" long, so it fits in a fridge. You first sanitize the vessel with a vial of sanitizer, fill it with cold water, add a sachet of pre-hopped liquid malt extract (they call this a 'Fresh Press' and have 20 or 30 different recipes), add the provided dry yeast, close the cap, give it a shake, connect it to a 'brewing dock' and leave it at room temperature for 5-10 days to ferment. Then remove the brewing dock, leaving behind the spent yeast (this is accomplished with no exposure to air, like a conical fermenter with a bulb), and put it in a fridge to condition/carbonate for 5-10 days. It's then ready to tap direct from the vessel. Key point, there's no mash or boil involved - which is good if the smell of malt and hops aren't super popular in your household! - and no utilities are required. The unit is well engineered and built, and it looks really sharp too; you could set it on a counter for a party and it would be a talking point!

I brewed their 'Dark Matter' dry stout and have to say it's pretty good. It poured beautifully, near black with red highlights and an excellent head that lasted well. Aroma and flavor notes of caramel and roast, some earthy hops, medium bitterness, (possibly a little phenol or something I couldn't put my finger on) and finishing appropriately dry; a light body as you'd expect for a dry stout, with good carbonation. I'll bring some to the February meeting if there's any left!

In my opinion this device could be fun for someone who'd love to make beer at home but doesn't have the space, time, inclination or whatever to invest in a typical Homebrew set-up, or maybe an experienced brewer who's just looking for a smaller, simpler, occasional, no-fuss approach. The unit costs about \$200 and each brew is about \$30. For more details see <https://pinter.com> Next up for me is Pinter's 'Space Hopper DIPA' which comes with an extra vial of hop oils to be added via a clever sealed port after fermentation. After I'm done with that, if anyone would like to try it just let me know. Cheers!

Ian



Primetime
Brewers

We are the OG club. We have the most experience. We have the most history. We have the most connections. We are the most social.