

Rubber Chicken Winter 2025

November: Belgian Tripel



Brewery Vivant

Belgians can be tricky. You want the right amount of spice, the right amount of lemon/orange phenols, and just the right amount of clove & honey. Be careful this one can be stronger ABV than the flavor tells you! I bottled conditioned mine (usually the smart thing to do so that it can age properly and be properly highly carbonated). I took third place, Matt Mead took second place, and this years Brewer of the Year took first place.

January: American Barley Wine



Bier Distillery & Brewery

Normally a beer that needs lots of aging, but we decided that would be too easy. With only a month or two to brew you just do your best. A strong beer with finishing gravity in the 1.020's takes lots of grain and some sugars to get the starting gravity in the 1.100's, it can push your equipment to the limits if you try and make a full 5 gallons, which is what I did. The flavors are very complex and not for the faint of heart with the alcohol content. This month was a Beauty Contest so that everyone could partake of the seven who participated. Jeremy Gavin took third place, I took second place, and Brewer of the Year starts strong with a first-place beer. Mies Martin has a great idea of having next January be the same style and we bring our beers back after a year of conditioning to see how they do.

Keep brewing and keep tasting!

Bill Smith

Secretary

Now a word from our President:

American Homebrewers Association

I had a couple of longish plane rides recently and read the latest edition of 'Zymurgy,' the AHA's magazine, cover-to-cover. It was inspiring! Not only for the photos of **Matt Mead**, Gold Medal winner in the 2024 National Homebrew Competition for his 'Treefort Stout', in the 16C: Tropical Stout category, and **Jeff Carlson**, double Gold Medal winner for his 'PrimeTime Perry', C1D: New World Perry and 'Westside Ligonberry', C2B: Fruit or Spice Cider (very well done guys), but also to read their recipes and brewing notes, and likewise for another 50+ medal-winning brews!

The recipes are presented in a very straightforward format and the brewing notes are fascinating, some brilliantly simple and others intriguingly complex. I was surprised to see recipes that had from just 3/4 oz to 24 oz of hops in a 5-gallon brew! If you're looking to improve your methods or get some ideas for different styles there's truly a mass of useful information here. Membership of the AHA is \$49 per year and that gives you access to hundreds of medal-winning recipes, articles, back copies of the magazine, discounted books, and other member deals. I don't know about everyone else (well I have an idea), but considering what I spend on home brewing year-round, this is a great investment!

By the way, the 2025 National Homebrew Competition is now open for registrations through February 19. Full details are at www.homebrewersassociation.org

In the same edition of Zymurgy, Julia Hertz, AHA Director, reports on a 'Bootcamp' for club officers' from around the US where problems and possibilities were shared. Some of their 'top-of-mind' problems are quite relatable, such as: meeting attendance dropping, first-timer retention, lack of judges and non-dues revenue. However, another article, 'Clubs Corner', describes what some clubs are doing, specifically in terms of attracting and retaining new members. Key to these, the article suggests, is the importance of "a virtual presence as brilliantly clear as a British bitter!", notably being 100% up to date with the club calendar, describing current activities, and not relying on Facebook! Which prompts a reminder that

PrimeTime's principal channel for communicating club activities is our website, www.primetimebrewers.com. While we have both a regular Facebook page (not much used), and a PTB Members Facebook page (used more), these are very much secondary.

As mentioned at our January meeting, Eric Smead has stepped up to help with our website admin. and communications, including posting minutes of monthly meetings. So a plea here to all members; please feed ideas or information to him on competitions, events, photos of club gatherings. Eric is at sre@dc616.org

GRCC / Fountain Hill Brewery

Despite the currently declining craft beer market as a whole (everyone knows this, and it's really sad to see some of our favorite places struggling, even closing down, RIP 3 Gatos), and their own declining student enrollment, GRCC is still very actively looking to promote their Craft Brewing program in the expectation of a cyclical recovery - it's happened in the past - and specifically to connect with homebrewers.

I attended a meeting there last week and there was much discussion about the 'Fountain Hill' taproom which has previously been open on Thursday evenings - we've had a few really good meetings there and they hosted an excellent Homebrew Open House last year - but the taproom is currently closed. The reason is that it has been staffed by students enrolled in the 'Taproom Operations' class, which is not required for graduation, and enrollment in that class is low! Seems an easy fix to me, but I'm not in charge!

However, there were lots of suggestions for sorting this out and other ways to involve the homebrew community such as holding homebrew-focused evening or weekend classes or training sessions, hosting a homebrew competition their students could judge alongside BJCP judges, participating in the Pro-Am, and so on. A subcommittee will try to move these ideas forward; if anyone has ideas please give them to me - quickly - and I'll feed them back.

UPCOMING EVENTS - they're on the website too!

Thurs. Feb. 6 BOB's Brewery

Sat. Feb. 15 Club Brew Day (see below)

Wed. Feb. 19 Two Guys

Sat. Feb 22 Winter Beer Festival

Thur. Mar 6 Küsterer

Sat. Mar 15 Bus Trip, Grand Haven

Wed. Mar. 19 Broadleaf

Thur. Apr. 3 Fountain Hill, TBC

Wed. April. 16 VanderMill

Club Brew Day, Feb 15

9:00 am at Eric Smead's house: 7828 Gulf Point Dr SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

All members welcome, whether brewing or not; bring something to share.

The club has ordered the ingredients for (8) 5-gallon brews of an Imperial Stout (recipe details attached), to be aged in a bourbon cask donated by Joel Bierling at Bier Distillery. The barrel fill date is March 8. A contribution of \$30 gets you the ingredients to brew and a bottle share of the end product, probably six months hence. Non-brewers can buy-in similarly.

Brewer signed up: DT, Ian Purvis, Bill Smith, Troy Schmidt & Melanie Mayse, Greg Sanial, Matt Mead, Chad Banks, Eric Smead.

Buying-in, so far: Ric Brown, Frank Zamarripa, Dave Kilgore, Gordon Schipper, Kyle Thaxton?

If anyone else wants a share, send \$30 to the club via PayPal, noted "stout buy-in".

See attached PDF file for the recipe: North Coast "Old Rasputin Russian Imperial Stout" Clone.

Brewers please note Eric's water profile. Make your own water adjustments or match others on the day.

FURTHER OUT

West Michigan Homebrew Party, July 26

I hope everyone has seen the notice from Mies Martin to 'save the date' for this '3rd Annual' party with Rivertown, PrimeTime and Brewsquitos getting together. Keepers of Craft from K'zoo are invited too. A pavilion has been booked for the day. There are grills, picnic tables and restrooms there. We'll bring our bar set-up and jockey box. Need kegs and food to share, and music would be good. It's free and open to all club members, past and present. As we get closer there'll be a sign up. Does anyone have a pig roaster??

That's it for now. Looking forward to seeing everyone at various events.

Cheers!

Ian Purvis

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