



JULY 1993

the Rubber Chicken

Summer Issue

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Rathbun's Ramblings

More pointless ramblings from the 'Prez.
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In fact, when I think of quaffing a brew in the summertime, my thoughts skip right over your IPAs' and Mucheners; and go right to a light, refreshing Lager or Pilsner style beer. I guess my mouth has a Pavlovian response to this type of beer during the summer months. In fact, just thinking about sitting in a lawn chair behind my house with one of those "jumbo" Pilsner Urquells" or a well chilled Carlsberg in front of me is almost more than I can stand, seeing that it's 10:30 P.M. on the Fourth of July and I'm at work.

Don't get me wrong, I still enjoy the heavier style of beers during the summer, but when it's warm outside I can't really drink a Guinness and come out of it feeling "refreshed". Have I been brainwashed? Is the hop-@-back between my shoulders devoid of gray matter? What's it to you? The fact that we enjoy the beer that we are drinking is justification enough. I must admit though, those of you that bring six-@-back cartons labeled "Carling Black Label" are riding that ragged edge of disaster.

So drink what you like. It's summer and a time to kick back and enjoy the stuff that you have put up for the summer months. Hopefully some of you reading this have better luck making those golden colored lager beers than I do

Right back at 'ya
'Prez.

Some items have been cluttering my file cabinet and while they are not important enough to warrant an article by themselves, I think I'll lump them all in together.

1. Perception is reality. Without getting too metaphysical with this, what we perceive is reality. Your first five homebrew batches or so were simply the best thing you ever tasted, and they were because you did it. I remember however giving a sample of my best brown to a friend who's opinion I valued. He tasted it and bluntly asked me if I believed this was really as good as an import. I remember mumbling something to the affirmative but then saw how later on after the party how my palm tree had gotten watered with some of my beer. Later I had to do a reality check and admitted that it could have used some work. I once read that perception is useful. A mother's opinion of her baby's looks intelligence etc. probably keeps her from drowning it at birth. (Bob Heinliens words not mine. You wana see my boy's pictures?)

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From the Prez! Keith Schutter



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Published Monthly or there abouts for the PrimeTime Brewclub of Greater Grand Rapids. Send articles, reviews, cartoons etc., to Mike Cartwright 1639 Margaret SE, GR, 07, or send them to EPC Fax # 698-7585. Please have submissions to me by the first of the month for the next newsletter, Thanks

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September 1993 Beer of the Month Specialty Beers by Bruce Brandt

A Specialty beer is one brew that almost all homebrewers try at least once. There's too much good stuff in the wife's cupboards that goes unused. What better place to try some weird ingredient than a batch of homebrew. But what actually defines a beer as a Specialty beer? In reviewing some references on Specialty beers, I was surprised to learn a few new guidelines. I had thought that any beer that had ingredients other than malt, water, hops, and yeast was a Specialty beer. In a sense it is but the AHA has made up several categories to better judge the different types. Beers that have a primary specialty ingredient of herbs or fruit have their own categories. Each of these categories also have a subcategory for classic beer styles with herbs or fruit in it. A cherry stout would fall under the classic style fruit beer subcategory. So what is just a plain old Specialty beer?

The AHA lists a Specialty beer as follows; 21. SPECIALTY BEER Any ale or lager brewed using unusual techniques and/or fermentable ingredients other than (or in addition to) malted barley as a unique contribution to the overall character of the beer. Examples include (but are not limited to) the use of honey and maple sap or syrup or heating the wort with white hot stones. Examples do not include fruit or herbs, though they can be used to add to the character of other uniquely fermentable ingredients.

a) Specialty Beer: Any non-classic style fitting the above description.
b) Classic-style Specialty Beer: Any classic ale or lager to which special ingredients or special process has been used, e.g. honey Pilsner, maple porter, sorghum stout, pumpkin pale ale. Brewer to specify style.

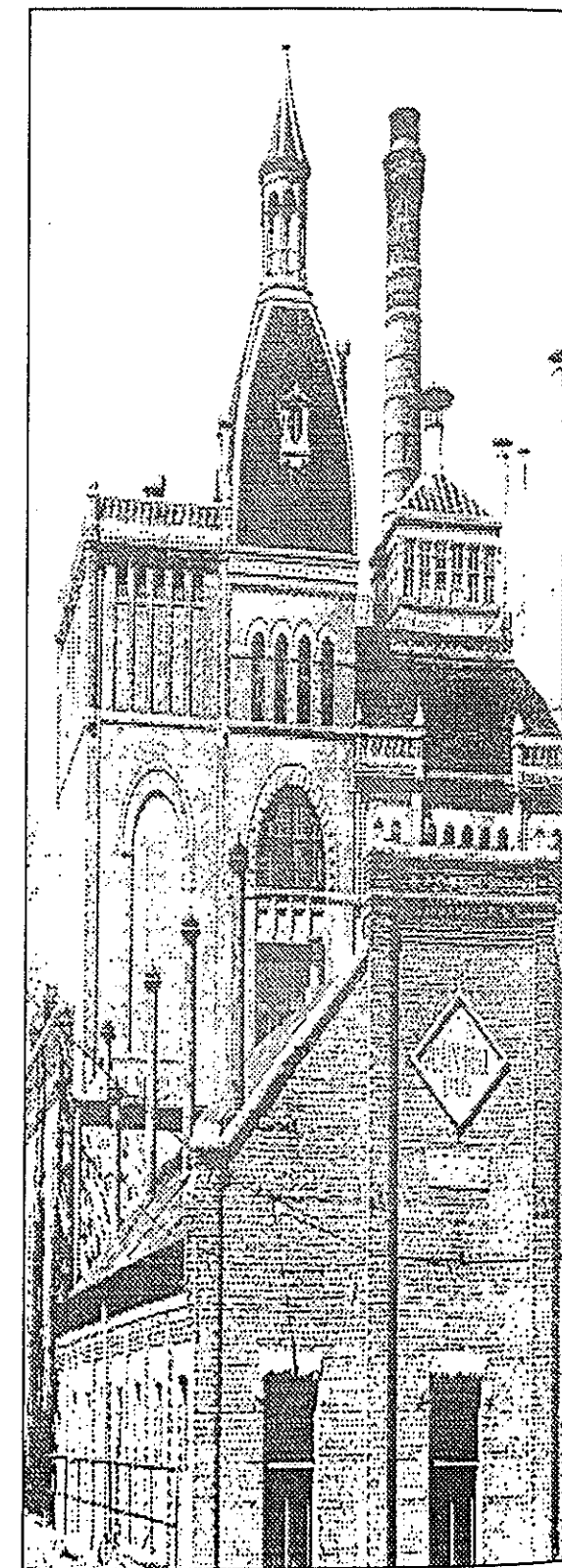
From what I gather from all this mumbo jumbo is that the Specialty beer category is wide open. You can add fruit, herbs, honey, and an old sneaker to a light lager and it can be called a Specialty beer. That is as long as the honey and sneaker flavors dominate. Most of you have tasted Rick Flynn's Espresso Stout. This beer is a perfect example of a classic-style Specialty beer. If the coffee was not added Rick's beer could be judged as a stout. Licorice porter and oatmeal stout would also fall under this subcategory.

If you've never made a Specialty beer there are a few simple recommendations. Lighter bodied and colored beers are easier to flavor since there's not much original flavor to compete with. Don't overhop the beer so your special ingredient can stand out. This does not include a classic beer style. Their hop rate must match typical standards. If you want some residual sweetness add extra crystal malt. Make sure that you like the taste of what your adding. Don't just blindly follow a recipe. If in doubt as to the amount of specialty ingredients to add try a one gallon batch first. So there you have it. There's no sense in trying to suggest a recipe since I wouldn't know where to start. If your thinking of making a pumpkin ale from all grain I do have a helpful hint. Don't try to mash the pumpkin with the

O.G.: 1.030-1.110
%Alc/vol: 2.5-12
IBU's: 0-100
Color SRM: 0-100

Refer to
individual style

grain. It's like trying to sparge rice pudding. Also for you chocolate lover's, the cocoa oil in the chocolate will give you a nice slimy, brown layer of gunk on the foam in your primary. Don't worry it's normal. Have fun with your wild ingredients and good luck. And remember, if you enter one of your brews be sure to list the main specialty ingredient and if it's made to a classic style.



As you are probably aware by now, the club has invested some of its precious treasury funds on a yeast bank. John Lemke has volunteered to maintain and prepare samples for the club members. I'm sure that if anybody would like to assist John in his task you will get no argument from him.

By mid July we should have received the yeast bank and have all of the necessary materials on hand. The plan that has been agreed upon by the Board, Steering Committee, and membership at June's meeting is as follows;

- 1.) At each month's meeting a yeast strain will be selected based on an upcoming monthly beer style or by general consensus.
- 2.) Members that wish to obtain a sample of that strain will be put on a list.
- 3.) Prior to the next month's meeting the yeast cultures will be prepared for distribution.
- 4.) On meeting night each member that signed the list will receive (1) 15 mL vial of inoculated wort. The cost per vial will be \$1.00. You can order as many as you like, within reason of course.
- 5.) Other yeast strains will be made available to members if there is a demand for a quantity of samples. This will be at John's convenience so be patient.
- 6.) All monies collected in excess of the operating costs will be added to the club's Treasury.

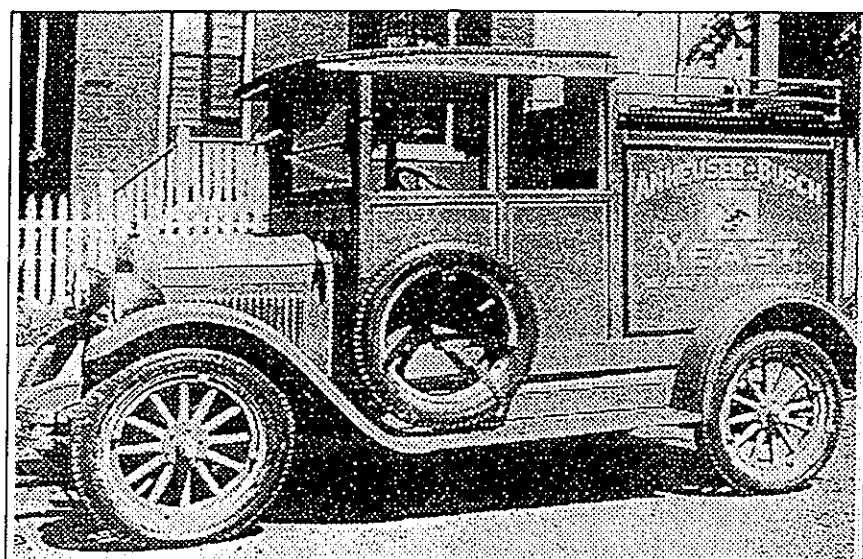
Before I get into how you will work with the yeast sample that you get, I want to describe John Lemke's task. The yeast bank will consist of (16) strains of yeast from around the world. Each strain will be in test tube filled with a solid growth media called agar. This test tube is referred to as a slant. The yeast in the slant is opened as little as possible to avoid contamination. Yeast can stay healthy and viable in a slant for 6 to 12 months with very little chance of mutations.

A new slant of yeast can be prepared from the original to keep the strain alive indefinitely. This means that we should never have to buy another yeast bank. We can also make our own slants from commercial brews and packaged yeasts.

John's work will begin by making up petri dishes filled with solid media. These will look just like the one's your doctor uses if you've ever had a throat culture taken. The filled petri dishes will be autoclaved at 15 psi for 15 minutes to sterilize them. Once they have cooled and set up solid, they are ready for use. A

inoculating loop will be heated over an open flame to sterilize it. The top will be removed from the slant tube and the mouth is flamed. A small sample is removed with the wire loop and smeared on the agar of the petri dish. The slant is once again flamed and then resealed. The petri dish is covered and allowed to grow new yeast cells. John will have to do this whole procedure as fast as

Yeast Culturing Techniques



possible while either holding his breath or breathing through a hose to avoid contamination. Sounds like fun huh!

The petri dish will become the working stock for that particular yeast strain and will keep at least 6 months. The inoculated petri dish will take several days to grow into yeast colonies. Selected healthy colonies will be placed in test tubes filled with 15 mL of sterile wort solution. The procedure for doing this is almost identical to that mentioned above. It will take a few days for the yeast to multiply and that will hopefully coincide with our meeting night for distribution.

Well, John's work will be done and your's will begin. A yeast culture of 15 mL is nowhere near what you need to pitch into a 5 gallon batch of beer. The proper amount is approximately 1000 mL for ales, 2000 mL for lagers, and 2000 to 4000 mL for strong beers. That's a lot of yeast. Lower quantities can be used but at the risk of extended lag times. I think most of us have at least once followed the directions on a package of liquid yeast (approx. 35 mL) and watched our wort sit for days before fermentation is evident. Sometimes they don't start at all.

The best way to utilize the 15 mL sample of yeast culture is to propagate it into progressively larger quantities of sterile wort. A typical progression would be 15 mL to 50 mL to 250 mL and finally to 1000 mL. It may be possible to skip the 50 mL

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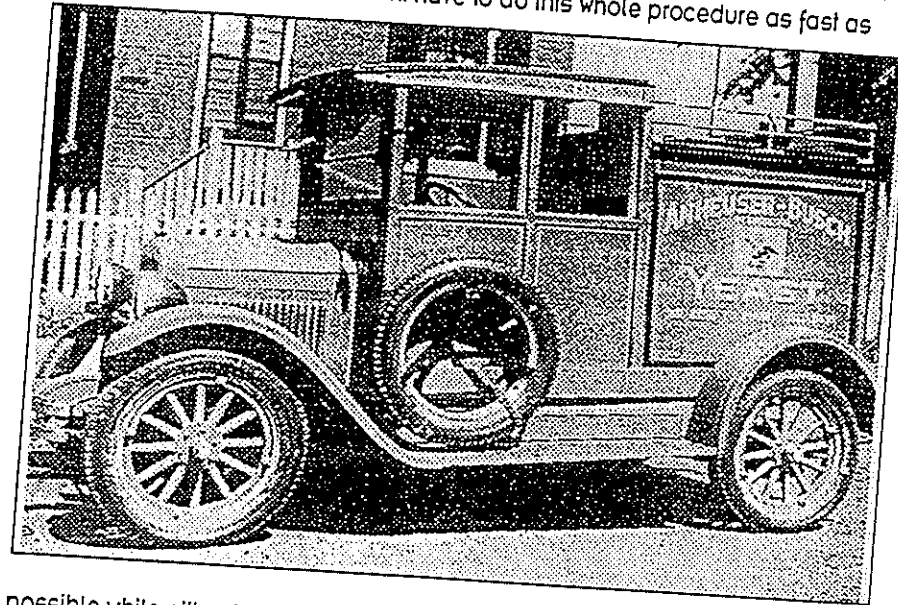
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step but only experience with that particular strain will tell. The bottom line being, the longer that it takes the yeast to dominate the wort the greater the risk of contamination. Sanitary conditions must be observed throughout the process so no bacteria is introduced. If proper techniques are used it's possible to keep reculturing your initial 15 mL sample into several batches of brew. The sterile wort that you pitch your sample into is pretty easy to prepare. I have used a few different methods and they all work well. The most sterile method is to prepare the wort and then pressure can it in mason jars. A pressure cooker must be used for a 15 minute period at 15 psi to sterilize the wort. The second method is a little more tricky and it's not really producing a sterile solution.

A beer or wine bottle is thoroughly cleaned and then left set full of sanitizing solution. A wort solution is made and left to boil for 10 to 15 minutes. Meanwhile a food grade funnel and bottle caps or plastic wine corks are being sanitized. About 5 to 10 minutes before the wort is done boiling the bottle is drained and then filled with hot water. This is done to preheat the bottle so it won't crack when you pour the boiling wort into it. When the wort is done boiling drain the bottle of hot water and immediately fill it with boiling wort and cap it. Put the bottle on a hot pad to cool or you can set it in your refrigerator. A word of warning, DON'T set the bottle in cold water unless it's made of pyrex. The temperature shock will definitely crack a beer or wine bottle. As a better alternative to sanitizing the bottles, caps, and funnel you can also boil them in water for 10 to 15 minutes.

I have used all three of these methods for culturing yeast. I pick which one I use based on what I'm trying to accomplish. Using a pressure cooker is by far the best method since it is truly a sterilization process. It is also the most time consuming. I typically pressure cook anything that I plan to keep or use over an extended period. If I plan to only use a yeast strain for a single batch of beer I usually save time by using one of the other two methods. Sanitizing works pretty good during the cold months but I always boil my equipment during the summer months.

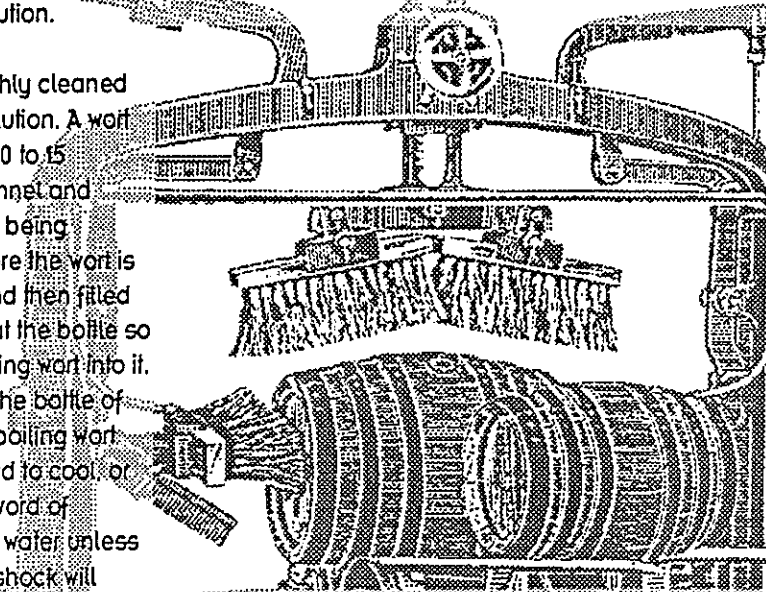
The wort that you prepare for culturing is most easily made from light dry malt. You want to achieve a specific gravity of around 1.040. This would equate to about 4 tablespoons per 16 ounces of water. If your gravity is too far below this there won't be enough food for a healthy yeast growth. Too high of a gravity can shock the yeast and inhibit its growth. The amount of yeast cells that you grow in a container is based on the volume. Yeast cells will multiply to a certain number of cells per cubic inch of wort and then stop reproducing.

Proper aeration of the wort is also critical to good yeast growth. You will have to shake the container of cold wort vigorously to aerate it enough. The addition of yeast nutrient is also a good idea to provide the yeast with enough minerals. A quarter of a teaspoon per 16 ounces of wort is plenty. Adding hops to the boiling wort is said to provide some preserving and antibacterial effects to the wort, but I have also heard otherwise. If you decide to put in hops a few high alpha pellets are enough for 16 ounces of wort. Now that you have a few bottles of wort ready to go you are ready for your 15 mL of yeast culture. The first step is to make sure that the culture and the wort are at the same temperature. Ale yeasts should be at room temperature or about 68 F. Lager yeasts should be started and maintained at around 40 to 48 F. If the temperature of the culture and the wort are more than 5 to 10 degrees apart you could shock the yeast. Leave both wort and culture in the same environment for a few hours and they should be at the same temperature.

A container of the proper size, that can be fitted with a fermentation lock, needs to be sanitized or preferably sterilized. You can also use the capped bottle of wort as a fermenter. All utensils that come in contact with the wort or culture need to be sanitized. You begin by opening the top of the container of wort. Flame the mouth of the container with a lighter or propane torch. Open the yeast culture tube and flame it too. Immediately pour the culture into the wort. Re-flame the top of the fermenter and attach a fermentation lock. Shake the bottle to mix and oxygenate the wort and leave it set out of the light at the proper temperature.

Within 12 to 36 hours you should see some sign of fermentation. Not all of the yeast strains that I have cultured have produced a layer of foam. They all had active bubbles and were cloudy, but no kraeusen. When the culture is showing good activity in the fermentation lock it is ready to transfer to the next size container. Repeat the original procedure until you have worked up the proper volume of yeast culture. If your sanitation techniques are good you can reculture the original sample for several batches of brew.

A good quality control method for your sanitation technique is to leave a small bottle of wort set at room temperature with a bubbler attached. If after 2 to 3 days there is no obvious activity remove the lock and taste a small sample. If it still tastes like wort you probably did a pretty good job. Tasting a bit of the culture after you have transferred it is also a good practice. Any foul smells or tastes in the culture will be carried on into your beer. If you have any suspicions of an infection throw out the culture and try again. I always have a few packages of the dreaded dry yeast on hand just in case.



The LastBurp

The Summer Party will Saturday Aug 28. At Chris's house in Newego. more details to follow. Plan to attend, quaff, stay the night and have another great time!

Brewing Calendar for 1993	
August	Steam Beer
September	Speciality Beer
October	Okotoberfest/Vienna
November	Strong Scotch Ale
	Barley Wine
	Imperial Stout
December	Holiday Beer



NO JULY MEETING,

INSTEAD WE WILL HAVE A SHORT MEETING IN AUGUST AT THE PICNIC/PARTY AT CHRIS CUDWORTH'S HOUSE IN AUGUST. WE WILL EITHER PUT SOMETHING IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER OR MAKE A SPECIAL MAILING, BUT WE WE WILL GET YOU DIRECTIONS, ETC.

WE WILL BE JUDGING THE CREAM ALES THE LAST WEEK OF JULY, SO GET YOUR BEERS TO THE DROPOFFS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED SPOTS BY SUNDAY JULY 25TH

THE STEAM BEER WILL BE JUDGED AT THE PARTY, BRING THEM ALONG.



Larry Simonsen
 1301 Woodcliff Drive SE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49506

