



The Barleycorn Press

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Brewing with the Winners - Porter

Dave Gannon

Porters really "have it all"! Which is why these beers became so popular when they were created in England in the early 1700s. Originally known as "Entire", they have just about everything in them--light malts, crystal malts, dark malts, and hops. And it was the simplicity of having everything in one beer, rather than mixing different beers at the tap (which had become the custom amongst pub-goers in London at the time), which led to the enormous popularity of these beers for more than a century.

The appearance of pale ales, and a growing consumer preference for lighter colored beers led to the gradual decline in popularity of porter over the next 100 years. But recent interest in darker and more flavorful beers has brought this venerable style roaring back, and the beers that "have it all" are now enjoyed by homebrewers and by fans of commercial craft brews.

Recipe Formulation

The specifications that define the porter style are quite broad, reflecting the wide variation in porters which have been produced by commercial producers over the centuries. In an attempt to bring order to chaos, or to at least provide some guidelines for judging beers in competitions, sanctioning bodies of homebrew competitions generally divide the category and recognize two types of porter. One is a smoother beer of lower gravity and lighter body which is brown in color and often has a distinct malty sweetness; this beer is often called "Brown Porter". The other is a more assertive and fuller-bodied beer which is dark brown to black in color, drier in taste, and may have a distinct hop character; this beer is often called "Robust Porter". This division of the style is simply

a tool which allows competition organizers to group like beers together so judges can compare beers that are more similar than they are different. But that division is artificial. No separation exists in the real world, and a wide variety of porters of different character are produced by traditional porter producers and by modern craft brewers.

Despite the diversity that exists within the porter style, there are certain characteristics that all porters should have. Traditional porters are ales, and porters should reflect this by having the typical fruity and estery characteristics of top-fermented beers. Traditional porters also use soft water in the brewing process, and soft water is well suited to brewing with darker malts. Porters should reflect their heritage by showing that they "have it all"; they should contain a variety of malts and hops, and all of these should come through to some degree and be evident in the taste of the beer. The number and mixture of ingredients that go into "Entire" will contribute a multitude of tastes, which in turn will yield a complex and interesting beer. But none of these tastes should be sharp or clashing. To the contrary, by the time the beer is served, all of the tastes should be harmonious, and they should work together to form an integrated whole.

Porters may vary in color, balance of sweetness and dryness, and level of hop character, but the best examples of this style are universally smooth, complex, and well integrated.

Let's look at two award-winning recipes to see how the best examples of this style are made.

Recipes from the 1997 Green Mountain Homebrew Competition

"Yeoman Porter"

Valdymar Kopec, St. Albans, Vermont

Robust Porter - 3rd Place In Category

(Recipe for 5 Gallons)

Grain Bill:

6.00 lb U.S. 2-row Pale malt
 2.00 lb English Pale malt
 1.00 lb Home-toasted malt (75° L)
 0.50 lb Aromatic malt
 0.50 lb Special B malt
 0.50 lb CaraMunich malt
 0.25 lb CaraVienne malt
 0.25 lb Black malt

Hops Schedule:

1.00 oz Northern Brewer hops - 90 minutes.
 1.00 oz Cascade hops - 90 minutes.
 1.00 oz East Kent Goldings hops - 20 minutes.
 0.50 oz Northern Brewer hops - dry hopped.

Procedure:

Mashed in grains and rested at 124° F for 20 minutes, then at 140° F for 25 minutes, then at 152° F for 90 minutes. Pitched with slurry of Wyeast #1968 yeast obtained from the primary fermenter of a previous batch. Fermented in primary fermenter for 3 weeks, then racked to secondary fermenter and dry hopped for 4 weeks. Fermentation was at 68° F. Primed with 0.50 cups corn sugar at bottling.

Original gravity - not noted

BJCP Exam To Be Offered In West Lebanon And Burlington

Green Mountain Masher and Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Master Judge Tom Ayres will administer the BJCP exam in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, and Burlington this winter.

The West Lebanon test is scheduled for Saturday, January 31, 1998, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Seven-Barrel Brewery. The Burlington exam will take place on Saturday, February 28, also from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Vermont Pub & Brewery.

Exam fees are presently \$50 for first-time takers and \$35 for retakes. For more details about the upcoming exams, contact Tom Ayres at 434-2939. You can also learn more about the BJCP and download an exam study guide from the program's World Wide Web site at <http://www.bjcp.org/>. 🖱

NEXT MEETING - Erik & Tim's!

The next Green Mountain Masher meeting will take place on Monday, January 5th at the home of Erik Sandblom and Tim Cropley. The business meeting will commence promptly at 7:30 P.M. Below are the directions for those who don't know (or remember) the way. There's a lot to them but they are very easy to follow.

From Burlington:

- (1) Take Rt. 116 south from Williston Rd. (near Al's French Fries and Grand Union) OR take I-89 south to the Williston exit then take Rt. 2A south then take a left where it meets Rt. 116.
- (2) A mile or two after you cross the Hinesburg town line, you'll come to a traffic light at a cross road. Take a left.
- (3) Go by CVU high school (on left) and at four way stop go straight.

- (4) Drive along the curvy road, pass Iroquois Manufacturing (on right), and over a small hill until you come to the Triple LLL trailer park on your right.
- (5) Go straight (not left on curve) to the cross road and stop sign.
- (6) Take a right onto North Rd. and drive 1.7 miles.
- (7) Take a left on Lincoln Hill Rd.
- (8) Go up the hill about 0.5 miles and take a right on CB Road. (this is the first road on the right and is across from a bunch of mail boxes).
- (9) The house is the first driveway on the right (after a telephone pole).

From Richmond:

- (1) From the traffic light in Richmond, go into town toward Huntington (Bridge St.).
- (2) Go over the bridge to a 90-degree right curve (you'll see the Round Church on your left) and follow the curve.
- (3) Go about 0.7 mile on the curvy road and take your first right (toward Hinesburg).
- (4) Go about 1.4 miles and stay on the main road (left 90 degree curve).
- (5) Go about 4.3 miles and go straight where the road curves right toward Hinesburg Village (get onto North Rd.).
- (6) Go through the crossroad (you'll go by the Triple LLL Trailer Park on your right after the crossroad) and continue for 1.7 miles.
- (7) Follow directions listed under "From Burlington" starting on Line 7.

From South or West:

Either contact Tim or Erik for directions or go east @ the traffic light on Rt. 116 in Hinesburg and then follow directions listed under "From Burlington" starting on Line 3.

There is some room to park near the house at the end of the driveway or you can park in the area off the right shoulder (across from the first house on the left) before the driveway. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tim by email at timc@dec.anr.state.vt.us during the day or Erik and Tim at 482-4446 in the evening and during the weekend. 🖱



Staff Box

The Barleycorn Press is a monthly publication of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club.

The Barleycorn Press appears in the final week of each month. **Contributions are due by the 15th of the month of publication.** Please mail contributions on 3.5" IBM compatible diskette (preferable) or via e-mail, or mail a hard copy to:

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This publication is made available free of charge to all dues paying members of the Green Mountain Mashers. Subscriptions are available to all other interested parties at \$10.00 yearly (US funds).

Note: The yearly dues of \$15 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Lewis Greitzer at the following address:

Lewis Greitzer
33 Harbor View Road #1201
South Burlington, Vermont 05403

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Minutes of the December Masher Meeting

Recorded By Phil Kaszuba,
Honorable Secretary of the

Keeping with tradition, the December meeting was hosted by Bob Johnson at the new Magic Hat Brewery. Held on Monday, December 1st the meeting was very well attended. His Excellency Paul Hale called the business meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

The meeting was opened with a statement by Paul thanking those who have contributed to the club newsletter and words of encouragement to all to submit material for publication in future editions. Dave Gannon reminded attendees that the first competition in the NEHBOTY series is to be held on Saturday, December 6th in Deerfield, MA. The Green Mountain Homebrew Competition date has been set at May 2, 1998 and will be held at the Magic Hat Brewery. Entry deadline has been set as April 17, 1998. John Gallagher is Judge Coordinator, Robin Orr - Registrar, Rich "Monk" Evans - Food Coordinator, Brook Anderson - Facilities, and Dan Marshall - General Operations.

Tim Croypley, who maintains a master list of mashers' e-mail addresses passed around the address list for attendees to update.

The meeting continued with an announcement of a new brewing related business venture in South Burlington. Burlington Brewing Company is a brew on premises facility introduced by Eric Morris. Eric extended an invitation for all to visit the Burlington Brewing Company which occupies the site of the old Ben & Jerry's scoop shop on Shelburne Rd.

Bob Johnson spoke briefly about the growth and transition of the Magic Hat Brewery into their newly opened, ex-

panded brewery. Bob and Magic Hat have generously hosted the December meeting and the Green Mountain Homebrew Competition for the past few years. Tom Ayres announced that for the third year in a row, a masher has placed second in the NEHBOTY competition. This year masher Cliff Timpson took NEHBOTY second place honors. Tom continued with an announcement of 1998 locations and dates for the BJCP exam. On 1/31/98 the exam will be given from 9 a.m. to noon at the Seven Barrel Brewery in West Lebanon, N.H. The exam will also be given at the Vermont Pub and Brewery in Burlington, Vt. on 2/28/98 from 9 a.m.-12 noon. Exam fee for first time takers is \$50 and for retakes \$30.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. and Bob gave tours of the new brewery.

The business meeting was then resurrected by Trekmeister Dan Hament at 9:15 p.m. to discuss Trub Trek '98. The date for this year's Trek has been set at 2/7/98. It will cover breweries of Central Vermont. John Gallagher will serve as reservation coordinator/registrar for the Trek.

The business meeting was laid to rest at 9:20 p.m. 🙌

Final gravity - not noted

(Continued on page 3)

Porters (continued from page 1)

Brown Porter

Dan Marshall, Burlington, Vermont

2nd Place in Category

(Also 1st Place in Category at the 1997

Yankee Brewer's Competition, 4/5/97)

(Recipe for 5 Gallons)

Grain Bill:

7.50 lb English Pale ale malt

1.00 lb English Crystal malt (60° L)

0.50 lb Wheat malt

0.25 lb Chocolate malt

0.25 lb Black patent malt

Hops Schedule:

1.00 oz Northern Brewer hops (7.5% AA) - 45 minutes.

0.50 oz Fuggles hops (4.0% AA) - 45 minutes.

1.00 oz East Kent Goldings hops (5.0% AA) - 15 minutes.

Procedure:

Mashed in grains and rested at 153° F for 90 minutes, then mashed out at 168° F. 2 tsp gypsum added to mash. Wort boiled for 105 minutes. 0.5 tsp Irish Moss added 15 minutes before end of boil. Pitched with Wyeast British Ale yeast stepped up before pitching.

Original gravity - 1.050

Racking gravity - 1.012

Final gravity - 1.011

Judges notes for Brown Porter:

Yankee Brewer's Competition (4/5/97):

"Fair fruit aroma. Flavor has good balance but hops dominate. Smooth aftertaste. Overall, a fine drinkable beer. Clean and pleasant aftertaste."

"Aroma has some hops, some fruitiness, and nice roasty notes. Color is deep brown which transilluminates a clear garnet. Nice hop flavor complimenting malt sweetness. Finishes a bit too dry. Bitterness mild and well-balanced. Overall, a good porter. Nice balance of ingredients, arguably could be improved with a better malt finish (and less attenuation)."

Green Mountain Homebrew Competition (5/3/97):

~~"Roast aroma comes through, but not roasted barley as is appropriate. Flavor is roasty, almost spicy. The finish is a little harsh, but doesn't wreck things. I can't detect any fermentation flaws. Overall, quite drinkable. A good overall recipe. Back off on the dark grains slightly to reduce the somewhat harsh finish."~~

"Faint malt aroma--some caramel, and a hint of butteriness beneath. Hop bouquet very low, which is OK for style. Deep brown in color with ruby highlights;

opaque. Pleasant sweet malty initial sensation, with some roastiness. A faintly

(Continued on page 4)

Porters (continued from page 3)

"powdery" finish, and some puckering astringency in the aftertaste. Overall, a promising beer which suffers from a possible technique defect, leading to astringent character. Ionic content of water or the handling of the specialty grains may contribute to astringency."

Comments

One of these beers was entered as a Brown Porter and the other was entered as a Robust Porter, so some differences in the recipes are to be expected. Nevertheless, both are award-winning porters, and they have certain similarities.

Both beers used pale malt as the base malt, and both beers used a number of crystal malts and dark malts to add com-

plexity. As would be expected, the Robust Porter contained more malt (which likely resulted in a higher original gravity) and a higher proportion of crystal malts and dark malts.

Both beers used three different types of hops (although the hops were used in relatively restrained quantities). The Brown Porter used less hops overall and no finishing hops, whereas the Robust Porter used more hops overall and even included a small charge of dry hops.

Interestingly, the Brown Porter used 2 tsp of gypsum to harden the water. Hard water is not characteristic of traditional porters, yet this was commented upon by only one of the judges.

Every beer has an optimal time at which it is at its best, and time was an issue or the Brown Porter. When judged in April, it was commended for having fruity esters and hops in the aroma, and a malty sweetness predominating in the

taste. When judged again one month later, the fruitiness and hops had nearly disappeared from the aroma, and the taste had become drier and slightly astringent over time; still an award-winning beer, but time had clearly changed the balance and the character of the beer.

In conclusion, these two award-winning beers are excellent examples of the Porter style of beer. Both brewers used a variety of malts and hops to add complexity to their beers, and both were successful in creating complex, well integrated beers that exemplified the Porter style. The style description for porter allows for quite a bit of latitude in terms of strength, balance, and proportions of malts and hops. But the key to making a successful porter is to use your imagination and your skill to produce a beer that is complex and well integrated.

(The author wishes to thank Valdymar Kopeck and Dan Marshall who took the



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