

# THE STRANGE BREW REVIEW



Green Bay Rackers, Green Bay, Wisconsin  
www.rackers.org, info@rackers.org



## A New Chapter

By Ryan Loock

So you called for this, you finally got it. As an organization, we are going to try this again. What the heck am I talking about, you ask? The Strange Brew Review of course.

In the past this newsletter has slipped into an abyss. Chuck Golueke and I are going to try our best to provide you, the reader, with some education pieces along with fun commentary on what has happened in the club recently. For any volunteer that would like to step forward and contribute in any capacity, please don't wait for anyone to knock on your door. Just contact Chuck or myself and let us know what you would like to say. I know that everyone doesn't want to read my boring stuff over and over again.

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With that being said, I ask the reader to please consider this newsletter as an amateur's attempt to entertain an organization. As you will see, Chuck and I have no formal training in writing and don't plan to either. However, we do want to amuse, enrich, and educate everyone that may come across these articles as best we can. Sit back, have a brew, and enjoy.

## November's: *As The Club Brews* (November 1, 2005)

By Ryan Loock

Except for the color of the freshly painted house, the absents of many men huddled around the black and white TV trying to decipher between red and blue states (if you weren't there last year, I'm referring to the Presidential election coverage), and the special flammable fire wood, everything seemed the same at the 2005 November Club Brew at the LaRene household. However, this night would be far from repetition.

The night started off with a little sprinkle to dampen the area but



Trevor's special flammable wood...Ooohh!



nothing The Rackers couldn't handle. Next the brewing gods must have been drinking way too much and decided to play a trick on our lovely host. While starting to introduce the lushes doppelbock to the belly of the boiling pot, Trevor thought to himself and said "#\$@!" (insert appropriate expletive or two here) as he saw a layer of spent grains layering his plastic pitcher. The false bottom had come detached from the outlet spout of the mash-tun. With a little manipulating and some Trevor ingenuity, the false bottom was put back on and the sparging began. Finally, the

Please see *As The Club Brews* on page 4



## Barrel-O-Porter

By Ryan Look

Attention all, the clubs Baltic Porter is resting peacefully in the basement of the House of Homebrew (go there and spend some money – shameless plug for Bob). The 50 gallons of Porter is letting the beer gods do their thing and hopefully provide the club with an endless supply of Baltic Porter. However, this will only happen if there will be another 5 gallon batch to add immediately when we rack off the first one. But don't get excited to drink it. It won't be tapped until possibly May for the annual trip to the Chilton Beer Festival.

For those who have no clue about what the heck

## It's All About Taste

By Mike Conard, BJCP Recognized Judge

Diacetyl is a taste component that most people would prefer not to have in their beer. Commonly described as a “buttery” or “butterscotch” aroma and flavor, it can also be perceived as in the mouth feel as a buttery or slick characteristic. In fresh beer it can sometimes be mistaken with that of caramel malts. Over time however, it is easy to distinguish the two as diacetyl is unstable in most beers and can take on raunchy notes. The caramel malts flavor tends to be stable and pleasurable.

While there are some brewers who actually want that characteristic in their beers (considering it a “house flavor” and the fact that style guidelines allow for its presence in some styles, the reality is that in most beers it is considered undesirable. It is estimated that 20% of beer drinkers do not

*“It is estimated that 20% of beer drinkers do not detect diacetyl even at a fairly high concentrations.”*



*Siphoning off the Porter,  
Isn't gravity cool!?*



*“Trevor, you said there  
would be women here!”*

we are talking about, Trevor LaRene assembled 9 brewers who defied Newton's first law (An object at rest tends to stay at rest) and brewed 10 batches of Baltic Porter. On November 6, those 9 brewers gathered and united all 10 batches to fill a 55 gallon used Oak Whiskey Barrel to hopefully produce a continuous supply of full bodied Porter.

So everyone cross their fingers and hope for the best.



detect diacetyl even at fairly high concentrations.

Pasteur's work in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century identified what we currently know as lactic bacteria as a cause of off-flavors in beer. It was not until the 1950s & 60s that other factors were found to contribute diacetyl. The main causes of diacetyl are:

- Cultured yeasts
- Bacterial contamination
- Fermentation temperature
- Yeast re-pitching
- Lack of adequate amino acids
- Oxidation

Please see *Taste* on page 5



## Christmas Party (December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005)

By Ryan Loock

Once again Christmas time has come upon us and that means another Racker Christmas Party. Well really, it is just another excuse for us to get together. Or maybe it just means that we all sit around, drink



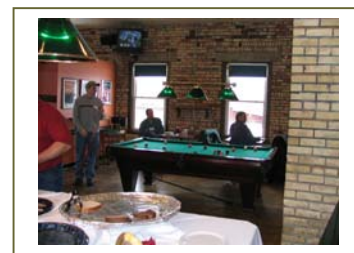
*The crowd is stirring.*



*Bob rigged the raffle and won some famous Old Gak Scotch Ale.*



*Mmmm...Food!*



*Pool anyone?*

beer, laugh, drink beer, eat, and maybe a little drinking of beer. I really don't see how this meeting is any different than any other meeting, except that everything is on the club.

Take a look at these pictures and see all the wackiness. You can see all of the pictures (and bigger size) on the Rackers' website. Check it out.

## December Business Meeting Minutes

By Mike Conard, Rackers Secretary/Treasurer

Green Bay Rackers HB Club Meeting

12/3/05

Meeting was called to order by the president. Minutes of the October meeting were read and approved as published. Treasury has \$399.12 in it, with some bills yet unpaid from the last club brew, the whiskey keg, and this holiday party.

### Old business:

1. Wood Sign (Bob Franklin) – It is lost somewhere in the offices at Titledown Brewing. Dave Oldenburg will make an “all out effort” along with Titledown management to find our sign!
2. Club's whiskey barrel porter (Trevor LaRene) – It is now filled and aging. First batch should be ready by the Manitowoc Jaycees Brewfest in February. We will need people to replace 5 gallons at a time of Baltic porter as we tap it off. These will be donations by club members and not paid for by the club. Trevor has been assigned by the president to be in charge of the barrel and arranging replacement.
3. Wine/Cider/Mead contest (Mike Conard) – The ALEs are interested in doing this with us. Everyone is encouraged to make their beverages with plans for the first contest to happen in January or February of 2007.

Please see *Minutes* on page 4



*As the Club Brew's* from page 1

brewing gods looked upon Trevor and the boiling began. With a small trick up his sleeve, Trevor introduced the small crowd to a process that has wort caramelize on superheated rocks and gives the doppelbock a little twist. (learn a little background on this process in the up coming newsletter). It was very interesting to see and the faithful were impressed.

Even after all the mishaps, Trevor dazzled us with the reason why he is still considered one of the top brewers in our club; he only missed the target gravity by 1 point! Call it what you will, luck or

skill, I think that is pretty damn good. And in addition to the spectacular "Doppelbocksteinator", Trevor also brewed a 10-gallon batch of mead that he promised to resist sampling too soon.

In closing, I would like to send thanks to Trevor's son, Ethan. His mood music was delightful and entertaining. Thanks again and keep playing.

Well, that was yet another installment of "As the Club Brews". Join us next time as we embark on another journey to the House of Homebrew for our January Club Brew.

*Minutes* from page 3

**New business:**

1. Manitowoc Jaycees Beer Festival will be February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The following people will brew for it:

- Jeff Trofka - "something red"
- Nick DeMark - Wheat beer (in bottles)
- Trevor LaRene - "something goofy & dark"
- Bob Franklin - Vienna style lager
- The club whiskey barrel porter

2. Great Taste of the Midwest (Bob Franklin) - Mark Morrison will be looking for volunteers to help and wants to have those identified by March. Those interested should let Bob know.



*Our fearful...I mean...fearless leaders, again. Good work gentlemen*

3. Chilton Brew Fest - Hinterland Brewing has offered to supply beer for the bus trip this year should we choose to sponsor it again.
4. Newsletter issues - Chuck Golueke asked that this be tabled until the next meeting.
5. Election of officers: The following individuals were elected to serve the 2006 year:
  - President - Bob Franklin
  - Secretary/Treasurer - Mike Conard
  - Website Manager - Matt Arnold
  - Newsletter Coordinators & Club Archivists - Chuck Golueke & Ryan Loock

Four bottles of Old Gak Scotch Ale were donated by Chuck Golueke and raffled off to four members.

Meeting adjourned to the holiday party.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Conard, Secretary

Approved:



Taste from page 2

### Yeasts

Brewer's yeast contains enzymes for both producing *and* reducing diacetyl. It is typically the highly flocculent yeasts which perceptible levels of diacetyl in beer. Typical strains used for porters, stouts, Belgian–styles, and English ales will impart a higher initial level of diacetyl. It should also be noted that re–pitching of yeast, even with proper washing techniques, will tend to increase the likelihood that a particular strain will impart diacetyl characteristics. This is due to yeast cell mutation. As mutation occurs, the diacetyl REDUCING ability of the cells tends to diminish and their ability to PRODUCE diacetyl increases.

### Temperature

Higher fermentation temperatures and flash fermentations tend to increase the amount of diacetyl formed during the fermentation process. (GAK has a nice diagram on his website [www.beerme.com](http://www.beerme.com) outlining how diacetyl occurs as a natural part of the fermentation process.) On the other hand, diacetyl reduction occurs faster at warmer temperatures as well. For this reason, a diacetyl rest is usually a good idea.

### Bacteria

The two bacteria that directly promote diacetyl production are the *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* species. This is an issue of sanitation. Re–pitching yeast is a common means of introducing bacteria in most professional brewing systems. For the homebrewer, it is usually an equipment sanitation issue.

### Wort & Proteins

Wort's deficient in valine tend to lead to elevated diacetyl levels. Both leucine and valine are regarded as critical amino acids because yeast usually cannot metabolize adequate replacements from other nitrogen sources if leucine and valine are missing.

If sufficient amounts of proteins are to be available in the fermentation, they must come from wort; this in turn depends on the amount of malted grains used. High–quality malt used with reasonable mashing systems will yield wort that is rich in all the relevant amino acids. The late George Fix has an excellent article in Brewing Techniques magazine that discusses free amino acids and their affect on diacetyl production & reduction.

([www.brewingtechniques.com/library/backissues/issue1.2/fix.html](http://www.brewingtechniques.com/library/backissues/issue1.2/fix.html))

### Oxidation

Adequate oxidation of wort prior to fermentation is an essential part of reducing diacetyl formation and the reduction of diacetyl once it has formed. Healthy yeast cells reduce diacetyl during the diacetyl rest and adequate oxygen in the wort makes for health yeast cells. Oxidation after fermentation can cause the accentuation of diacetyl to a detectable level. Therefore, reducing head space in bottles/kegs and keeping head space filled with carbon dioxide rather than air is a good idea.

### References:

Diacetyl: Formation, Reduction, and Control  
by George J. Fix  
*Brewing Techniques*' July/August 1993.

Richard Stueven  
for the Green Bay Packers newsletter  
April 2003

*“Both leucine and valine are regarded as critical amino acids because yeast usually cannot metabolize adequate replacements from other nitrogen sources if leucine and valine are missing.”*



## Wonder What That Takes Like?

By Trevor LaRene

Is there any interest in starting a tasting club?

Not beers....whiskeys.

I've had this idea rolling around my head for a little while. I really like massive, rich and complex-tasting things. (For example, see my choice of beers to brew.)

I'd love to try a variety of whiskeys, but buying all the bottles is inconvenient, expensive and wasteful, because not all of them will be to my tastes. And going to a bar, even one as nice as Titledown, is not my first choice either (cost, limited selection, smoky atmosphere...)

So...my idea is, nothing too complex or fancy, but get a few guys together and rotate among each other's homes, maybe gathering about every other month, every third month or whatever. Everyone brings a bottle of whiskey, not the cheap "Heaven Hill"-type, but some of the better stuff. We would sample each, trying a variety of different tastes. We might even want to specify a particular type (Scotch, Irish, Bourbon, etc) for each meeting, so that we are comparing similar types.

Anyone interest? Think about it, and let Trevor LaRene (larene@tds.net) know your thoughts.



## Business Meetings

2006 Dates	Location	Style
February 4 <sup>th</sup>	Titledown	Bock, Doppelbock, Dunkel
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Titledown	Belgian & Trappist Ales, Lambic
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Picnic?	Pilsner, Helles, Kolsch, Alt
August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Titledown	Bitter, Pale Ale, "Lawnmower"
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	Titledown	Oktoberfest, Vienna
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Titledown	"Christmas", Barleywine, Strong Ale

## Club Brews

2006 Dates	Brewmaster
January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	House of Homebrew
March 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>We need a brewer!!</b>
May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>We need a brewer!!</b>
July 11 <sup>th</sup>	Matt Arnold, et al
September 5 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Conard
November 7 <sup>th</sup>	Trevor LaRene

\* These dates are subject to change. See website for updates.

## New Member Alert

Say Hello to our new friends:

Tim Titler; beer enthusiast

Ron DeMark, Manitowoc (Nick's dad); Beer enthusiast

We need 2006 dues!! Cost \$25, contact Mike for info

## Bullet Board

Mike Conard will be offering a BJCP Exam Prep Coarse Beginning February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Contact Mike or see website for more details.

Upper Mississippi Mash-Out January 20-21. See <http://www.mnbrewers.com/mashout/> for info

*"Without question, the greatest invention in the history of mankind is beer. Oh, I grant you that the wheel was also a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with pizza." -Dave Barry*