

# The Herald Tribune



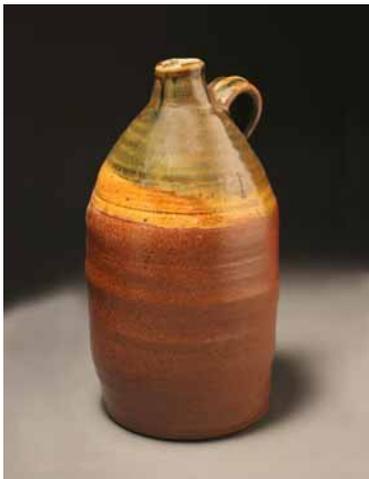
Volume # 23 Issue #8

Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

August 2009

## August Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday August 14th. It will be hosted by **Jay Howe** at the Corner Brewery and will feature a showing of his utilitarian brewhouse ware. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **Amber Hybrid**.



### AABG 2009

January .....	Rolf Wucherer .....	Strong Ale
February .....	Mike O'Brien .....	English Pale Ale
March .....	Chris Frey .....	1.080+*
April .....	Matt and Rene Greff ....	Extract
May .....	Stephen Krebs .....	Scottish and Irish Ale
June .....	Mark Zadvinskis .....	Spice/Herb/Vegetable
July .....	Steve Darnell .....	Fruit Beer
August .....	Jay Howe .....	Amber Hybrid*
September .....	Jeff Renner .....	European Amber Lager*
October .....	John Rathmell .....	Pilsner
November .....	Chris Frey .....	Belgian Strong Ale*
December .....	Rolf Wucherer .....	Sour Ale

\* Denotes AHA Club Only Competition Style

All meetings are the second Friday of each month beginning at 7:30 p.m., except for the July meeting (BeerBQ) which is the second Saturday.

## AABG Pico System

The guardian of the club's pico system is Mike O'Brien.

Anyone wishing to use it should contact him at:

734.637.2532 or e-mail:

[mobrien315221MI@comcast.net](mailto:mobrien315221MI@comcast.net)

Newsletter: steve darnell • 734.487.4045 • [zootalure11@yahoo.com](mailto:zootalure11@yahoo.com)

## The Art of Jay Howe

This show celebrates utilitarian brewhouse ware. Mugs, pitchers, growlers, jugs, tasting vessels and even tap handles are some of the examples of ceramics in this natural environment.

I have drawn influences from German, English and French Medieval salt-fired jugs and krugs, from Japanese tea bowls, and from Early American bottles to come up with functional work intended to be used expressively for craft beer. There are tasters with tight lips and wide



bellies reminiscent of the Belgian tulip style. There are bottles and growlers for the travelers. I have also adapted the Japanese tea bowl to hold mead, a fermented honey beverage. The open lip and wide belly create space for the aroma of the mead to be enjoyed. My mugs feature a traditional pulled English handle that fits comfortably in the hand. While most of my mugs hold a full pint, some a bit larger for session beers, some a bit smaller for imperial styles. My pitchers and bottles are large enough to serve, yet light enough so that they can easily be poured and used.

My personal aesthetic embraces smooth curved lines made by my hands and the surface created within the salt kiln. I adore the intimate, tactile way that utilitarian ceramics are appreciated. In the hand and against the lips, function and surface blend together and are intrinsically understood as the act of drinking itself becomes an aesthetic experience.

## Hybrid Beers

Hybrid beers are those that don't fit neatly into either the ale or lager category. There are relatively few examples of them. The difference usually lies in the unique technique used to brew them. California common, for instance, is brewed with a lager or bottom fermenting yeast but it is fermented at an unusually high temperature for lagers. Hybrids are typically dry like lagers but retain malty flavors.

### 7. Amber Hybrid

#### 7A. Northern German Altbier

Commercial Examples: DAB Traditional, Hannen Alt, Schwelmer Alt, Grolsch Amber, Alaskan Amber, Long Trail Ale, Otter Creek Copper Ale, Schmaltz' Alt

#### 7B. California Common Beer

Commercial Examples: Anchor Steam, Southampton Steem Beer, Flying Dog Old Scratch Amber Lager

#### 7C. Düsseldorf Altbier

Commercial Examples: Altstadt brewpubs: Zum Uerige, Im Füchschen, Schumacher, Zum Schlüssel; other examples: Diebels Alt, Schlösser Alt, Frankenheim Alt

### 7B. California Common Beer

**Aroma:** Typically showcases the signature Northern Brewer hops (with woody, rustic or minty qualities) in moderate to high strength. Light fruitiness acceptable. Low to moderate caramel and/or toasty malt aromatics support the hops. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Medium amber to light copper color. Generally clear. Moderate off-white head with good retention.

**Flavor:** Moderately malty with a pronounced hop bitterness. The malt character is usually toasty (not roasted) and caramelly. Low to moderately high hop flavor, usually showing Northern Brewer qualities (woody, rustic, minty). Finish fairly dry and crisp, with a lingering hop bitterness and a firm, grainy malt flavor. Light fruity esters are acceptable, but otherwise clean. No diacetyl.

*Amber Hybrid continued on next page...*

## WHEN AND WHERE

Friday, August 14, 7:30 pm

Jay Howe

The Corner Brewery  
720 Norris St  
Ypsilanti, MI 48198  
480 2739

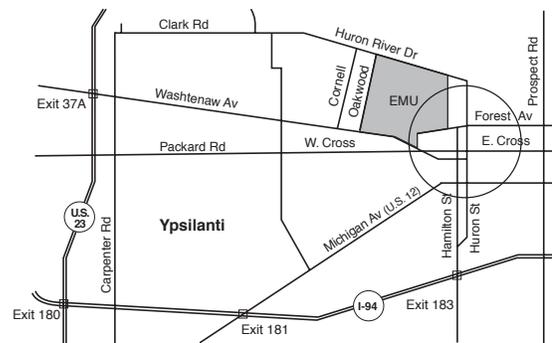


## AABG Policy

AABG encourages responsible, legal consumption of homebrewed and craft beers. You must be at least 21 years old to attend AABG meetings.

## Guide for New Members

Bring 1–2 bottles per batch of your beer that you'd like to share, or an interesting commercial beer. Bring tasty munchies to cleanse the palate and sop up the alcohol. Feel free to share and sample with other members and make and accept constructive comments. Please use good judgment while imbibing and don't drive while intoxicated.



... **Amber Hybrid** continued

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-bodied. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

**Overall Impression:** A lightly fruity beer with firm, grainy maltiness, interesting toasty and caramel flavors, and showcasing the signature Northern Brewer varietal hop character.

**History:** American West Coast original. Large shallow open fermenters (coolships) were traditionally used to compensate for the absence of refrigeration and to take advantage of the cool ambient temperatures in the San Francisco Bay area. Fermented with a lager yeast, but one that was selected to thrive at the cool end of normal ale fermentation temperatures.

**Comments:** This style is narrowly defined around the prototypical Anchor Steam example. Superficially similar to an American pale or amber ale, yet differs in that the hop flavor/aroma is woody/minty rather than citrusy, malt

flavors are toasty and caramelly, the hopping is always assertive, and a warm-fermented lager yeast is used.

**Ingredients:** Pale ale malt, American hops (usually Northern Brewer, rather than citrusy varieties), small amounts of toasted malt and/or crystal malts. Lager yeast, however some strains (often with the mention of "California" in the name) work better than others at the warmer fermentation temperatures (55 to 60 °F) used. Note that some German yeast strains produce inappropriate sulfury character. Water should have relatively low sulfate and low to moderate carbonate levels.

### Vital Statistics:

OG: . . 1.048 - 1.054  
FG: . . 1.011 - 1.014  
IBUs: . . . . 30 - 45  
ABV: . . . . 4.5 - 5.5%  
SRM: . . . . 10 - 14

## ABC

Anchor Brewing Company was founded in 1896, and was purchased by its current owner, Frederick Louis Maytag III, in 1965, saving it from closure. Maytag purchased 51 percent of the brewery for a few thousand dollars, and later purchased the brewery outright. It moved to its current location in 1979.

During the 1980s *Anchor Steam Beer* began to achieve national notice and demand increased from only a few thousand cases a year that he had been making in the old tradition.

In 1993, the company opened Anchor Distillery, a microdistillery in the same location as the brewery, and began making a single malt rye whiskey, named *Old Potrero* after the hill. In 1997, the microdistillery began producing gin, called *Junipero*, Spanish for juniper, and a reference to Junipero Serra, an important figure in San Francisco's and California's history. Recently they have also begun producing a Jenever style gin called *Genevive*, using wheat, barley, rye, and the same herbal ingredients as their *Junipero* gin.

## Steam Beer

Steam beer may be defined as a highly effervescent beer made by brewing lager yeasts at ale fermentation temperatures. It has two distinct but related meanings:

- Historic steam beer produced in California from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s;
- Modern California common beer, the official name for the beer family which includes Anchor Steam beer.

Historic steam beer, associated with San Francisco and the U. S. West Coast, was brewed with lager yeast without the use of refrigeration. It was an improvised process, originating out of necessity, perhaps as early as the Gold Rush. It was considered a cheap and low-quality beer, as shown by references to it in literature of the 1890s and 1900s.

Modern steam beer, properly known in the brewing community as *California common beer*, was originated by Anchor Brewing Company, which trademarked the name Anchor Steam Beer in 1981. Although the modern company has corporate continuity with a small brewery which was still making traditional steam beer in the 1950s, Anchor Steam beer is a craft-brewed lager. The company does not claim any close similarity between it and turn-of-the-century steam beer.

Explanations of the word “steam” are all speculative. The carbon dioxide pressure produced by the process was very high, and one possibility is that it was necessary to let off “steam” before attempting to dispense the beer. According to Anchor Brewing, the name “steam” came from the fact that the brewery had no way to effectively chill the boiling wort using traditional means. So they pumped the hot wort up to large, shallow, open-top bins on the roof of the brewery so that it would be rapidly chilled by the cool air blowing in off the Pacific Ocean. Thus while brewing, the brewery had a distinct cloud of steam around the roof let off by the wort as it cooled, hence the name. It is also possible that the name derives from “Dampfbier” (literally “steam beer”), a traditional German ale that was also fermented at unusually high temperatures and that may have been known to nineteenth-century American brewers, many of whom were of German descent.

### Brewing process

In 19th-century California, not only ice, but even sources of naturally cold water, were probably unavailable to brewers. California brewers were forced to use lager yeast at higher ale temperatures.

Final flavors of beer are influenced by the strain of yeast and the fermentation temperature. Lager yeast is best used at temperatures from 55°F down to 32°F. Classic lagering of beers takes place over a period of time from weeks to many months at a temperature of 45°F. Lager yeasts are *bottom fermenting*, which is to say that they ferment the wort while sitting on the bottom of the fermenter.

Ale yeast is best used at temperatures from 55°F to 75°F. Fermentation by ale yeasts produces a beer that has a distinctive ale flavor.



Ale yeasts are top-fermenting, that is they settle out on top of the wort after fermenting (fermentation itself takes place in a suspension.) Steam Beer uses bottom fermenting lager yeasts at ale temperatures, which results in a very distinctive flavor profile that includes both ale and lager characteristics.

While steam beer is considered a specialty microbrew style of beer today, it was originally a cheap beer made for blue collar workers. Wahl and Heinius's *American Handy Book of Brewing and Malting* (1902) describes California Steam Beer as “a very clear, refreshing drink, much consumed by the laboring classes.” And while Anchor Steam is an all-barley malt beer, additives were often used in the early days. According to the book, “malt alone, malt and grits, or raw cereals of any kind, and sugars, especially glucose, employed in the kettle to the extent of 33.3 percent... roasted malt or sugar coloring is used to give the favorite amber color of Munich beer.”

### Altbier

Altbier (often abbreviated to *Alt*) is the name given to a form of German top-fermenting beer that originated in Westphalia and spread to parts of the Rhineland later.

The name *Altbier*, which literally means *old [style] beer*, refers to the pre-lager brewing method of using a warm top-fermenting yeast like British pale ales. Over time the Alt yeast

adjusted to lower temperatures, and the Alt brewers would store or lager the beer after fermentation, leading to a cleaner, crisper beer than is the norm for an ale.

### History

The Bavarian Reinheitsgebot (beer purity law; literally “purity order”) of 1516 was drawn up to ensure the production of decent-quality beer; however, this decree did not affect brewers of the Rhineland. As such, the brewing traditions in this region developed slightly differently. For example, brewing during the summer was illegal in Bavaria, but the cooler climate of the Rhineland allowed Alt brewers to brew all year long and to experiment with storing fermented beer in cool caves and cellars.

The name “altbier” first appeared in the 1800s to differentiate the beers of Düsseldorf from the new pale lager that was gaining a hold on Germany. Brewers in Düsseldorf used the pale malts that were used for the modern pale lagers, but retained the old (“alt”) method of using warm fermenting yeasts.

The first brewery to use the name Alt was Schumacher which opened in 1838. The founder, Mathias Schumacher, allowed the pale ale to mature in cool conditions in wooden casks for longer than normal, and laid the foundation for the modern alt beer - an amber coloured, lagered ale. The result is a pale ale that has some of the lean, dryness of a lager, with the fruity notes of an ale.

### Regional Alts

Up to the 1950s, *Alt* was also called *Düssel* (from *Düsseldorf*), but since the term is not a Protected Designation of Origin, *Altbier* may also be produced outside of the Düsseldorf region. Venlo, a city in the Netherlands on the German border near Düsseldorf, produced the first Dutch Altbier. Similar varieties, also called altbiers, are associated with some other cities in Germany, particularly Hannover. Altbier is also brewed in small quantities in Austria, Switzerland and the United States.

Düsseldorf and Cologne are long-time rivals, though today it mostly comes down to whose beer is better, Düsseldorf's Altbier or Cologne's Kölsch, another top-fermented beer.

Some alt breweries have a tradition of producing a strong ale known as *Sticke Alt*, coming from a local dialect word meaning “secret”. It is generally a seasonal or special occasion brew, and is stronger and sometimes darker than the brewery's standard output.