

The Herald Tribune



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Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

February 2009

February Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is **Sunday** Feb. 15th and will be hosted by **Mike O'Brien**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **English Pale Ale**.



AABG 2009

January	Rolf Wucherer	Strong Ale
February	Mike O'Brien	English Pale Ale
March		1.080+*
April	Matt & Rene Greff	Extract
May	Stephen Krebs	Scottish and Irish Ale
June	Mark Zadvinskis	Spice/Herb/Vegetable
July		Fruit Beer
August	Tom Roach	Amber Hybrid*
September	Jeff Renner	European Amber Lager*
October		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

Meeting Notes

February is such a BAD month in Michigan! Days are still short—but getting longer—and there is still too much snow—in my book! So let's make a little fun!

Let's have the February meeting on Sunday the 15th at, 720 Norris Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198 (The Corner Brewery).

Let's gather in the afternoon to brew a collaboration beer—say starting around noon (1pm-ish). This would be a continuation of the Eccentric Ale series. The series first started in July 2001 with Bizzaro #1. This would be the second 'in the series'!

- We would gather together, each bringing our 'own special ingredients' (I get spruce!). We will start with half a bag of Maris Otter malt, more or less.
- Bob B. is going to bring home toasted malt.
- Jeff R. is bringing the flaked corn.
- Rog is bringing three kinds of cinnamon!
- Phill is bringing wormwood?
- Steve H. is offering Nugget and Cascade hops

That's a pretty good start right their! What are you bringing?

I am thinking that this might be a 20 gallon batch. This would let us 10 gallons to leave with our hosts—which they will share with the group, in a couple of weeks on a Wednesday evening—leaving us 10 gallons to bottle for 'posterity'.

I will bring couple of bottles of Bizzaro #1 for inspiration! (Thanks Jim!)

Which means we will need a new Bizzaro #2 label! Mark / Phill or anyone else with a creative streak, here is your chance to create a label for our new brew!

This brewing session could lead to other 'brewing opportunities' for interested brewers.

As we are wrapping up the brewing we will set up a potluck supper, say around 4pm, featuring a **Door County Fish boil**.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMPbRSzB2yE>

We promise a 'safe' boil over!

The usual beer samplings will take place in the brewing area. Family fun, games and tv's will be available. — Mike O'Brien

8. ENGLISH PALE ALE

- 8A. Standard/Ordinary Bitter
- 8B. Special/Best/Premium Bitter
- 8C. Extra Special/Strong Bitter (English Pale Ale)

Aroma: Hop aroma moderately-high to moderately-low, and can use any variety of hops although UK hops are most traditional. Medium to medium-high malt aroma, often with a low to moderately strong caramel component (although this character will be more subtle in paler versions). Medium-low to medium-high fruity esters. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed. May have light, secondary notes of sulfur and/or alcohol in some examples (optional).

Appearance: Golden to deep copper. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white to off-white head. A low head is acceptable when carbonation is also low.

Flavor: Medium-high to medium bitterness with supporting malt flavors evident. Normally has a moderately low to somewhat strong caramelly malt sweetness. Hop flavor moderate to moderately high (any variety, although earthy, resinous, and/or floral UK hops are most traditional). Hop bitterness and flavor should be noticeable, but should not totally dominate malt flavors. May have low levels of secondary malt flavors (e.g., nutty, biscuity) adding complexity. Moderately-low to high fruity esters. Optionally may have low amounts of alcohol, and up to a moderate mineral/sulfury flavor. Medium-dry to dry finish (particularly if sulfate water is used). Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium-full body. Low to moderate carbonation, although bottled commercial versions will be higher. Stronger versions may have a slight alcohol warmth but this character should not be too high.

Overall Impression: An average-strength to moderately-strong English ale. The balance may be fairly even between malt and hops to somewhat bitter. Drinkability is a critical

Pale Ale continued on next page...

When and Where

Sunday, Feb. 15, 12 Noon

Mike O'Brien

720 Norris

Ypsilanti MI

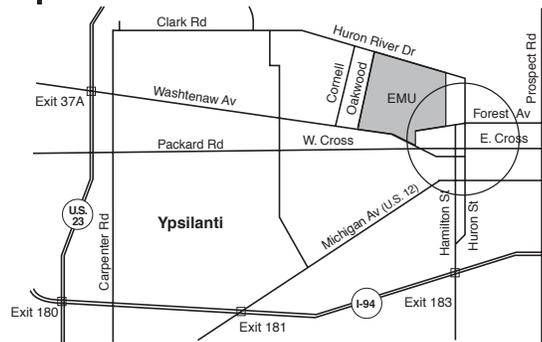


AABG Policy

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.



... *Pale Ale* continued

component of the style; emphasis is still on the bittering hop addition as opposed to the aggressive middle and late hopping seen in American ales. A rather broad style that allows for considerable interpretation by the brewer.

History: Strong bitters can be seen as a higher-gravity version of best bitters (although not necessarily "more premium" since best bitters are traditionally the brewer's finest product). Since beer is sold by strength in the UK, these beers often have some alcohol flavor (perhaps to let the consumer know they are getting their due). In England today, "ESB" is a brand unique to Fullers; in America, the name has been co-opted to describe a malty, bitter, reddish, standard-strength (for the US) English-type ale. Hopping can be English or a combination of English and American.

Comments: More evident malt and hop flavors than in a special or best bitter. Stronger versions may overlap somewhat with old ales, although strong bitters will tend to be paler and more bitter. Fuller's ESB is a unique beer with a very

large, complex malt profile not found in other examples; most strong bitters are fruitier and hoppier. Judges should not judge all beers in this style as if they were Fuller's ESB clones. Some modern English variants are brewed exclusively with pale malt and are known as golden or summer bitters. Most bottled or kegged versions of UK-produced bitters are higher-alcohol versions of their cask (draught) products produced specifically for export. The IBU levels are often not adjusted, so the versions available in the US often do not directly correspond to their style subcategories in Britain. English pale ales are generally considered a premium, export-strength pale, bitter beer that roughly approximates a strong bitter, although reformulated for bottling (including containing higher carbonation).

Ingredients: Pale ale, amber, and/or crystal malts, may use a touch of black malt for color adjustment. May use sugar adjuncts, corn or wheat. English hops most typical, although American and European varieties are becoming more common (particularly in the paler examples). Characterful English yeast. "Burton"

versions use medium to high sulfate water.

Vital Statistics:

OG: . . . 1.048 – 1.060
FG: . . . 1.010 – 1.016
IBUs: 30 – 50
ABV: 4.6 – 6.2%
SRM: 6 – 18

Commercial Examples: Fullers ESB, Adnams Broadside, Shepherd Neame Bishop's Finger, Young's Ram Rod, Samuel Smith's Old Brewery Pale Ale, Bass Ale, Whitbread Pale Ale, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Marston's Pedigree, Black Sheep Ale, Vintage Henley, Mordue Workie Ticket, Morland Old Speckled Hen, Greene King Abbot Ale, Bateman's XXXB, Gale's Hordean Special Bitter (HSB), Ushers 1824 Particular Ale, Hopback Summer Lightning, Great Lakes Moondog Ale, Shipyard Old Thumper, Alaskan ESB, Geary's Pale Ale, Cooperstown Old Slugger, Anderson Valley Boont ESB, Avery 14'er ESB, Redhook ESB.



English Pale Ale

Bitter is a British term for a style of beer or pale ale. The expression first appeared in the UK in the early 19th century as part of the development and spread of pale ale.

Brief history

Pale ale was a term used for beers made from malt dried with coke. Coke had been first used for roasting malt in 1642, but it was not until around 1703 that the term *pale ale* was first used. By 1784 adverts were appearing in the *Calcutta Gazette* for “light and excellent” pale ale. By 1830 onward the expressions *bitter* and *pale ale* were synonymous. Breweries would tend to designate beers as *pale ale*, though customers would commonly refer to the same beers as *bitter*. It is thought that customers used the term *bitter* to differentiate these pale ales from other less noticeably hopped beers such as *porter* and *mild*. By the mid to late 20th century, while brewers were still labeling bottled beers as pale ale, they had begun identifying cask beers as *bitter*. While the two terms are still used interchangeably in the UK, the preference is for the term *bitter* to be used for both bottled and cask beer, and use of the term *pale ale* has declined, except in the case of India pale ale.

Style

Bitter belongs in the *pale ale* style grouping, though bitter does have a greater variety of strength, flavour and appearance than mainstream pale ale. A bitter can be dark amber, approaching a *stout*, or be very golden and delicate like a *golden summer ale*. It can also go under 3% abv as with *Boys Bitter* and as high as 7% with some *premium* or *strong* bitters. During the early to mid 20th century there were some regional preferences noted which may still be detected in the beers of some of the more established breweries. In Cornwall, Wales, North England and Scotland the preference was for sweeter, less hopped beer. In other areas, particularly Southeast England, the preference was for hoppy beers.

Sub-types of bitter

British brewers have several loose names for variations in beer strength, such as *IPA*, *best bitter*, *special bitter*, *extra special bitter*, and *premium bitter*. There is no agreed and defined difference between an *ordinary* and a *best bitter* other than one particular brewery's *best bitter* will usually be stronger than its *ordinary*. Two groups of drinkers may mark differently the point at which a *best bitter* then becomes a *premium bitter*. Hop levels will vary within each

sub group, though there is a tendency for the hops in the *session bitter* group to be more noticeable.

Drinkers tend to loosely group the beers into:

Session or ordinary bitter

Strength up to 4.1% abv. The majority of British beers with the name *IPA* will be found in this group, such as Greene King IPA, Deuchars IPA, Flowers IPA, Wadworth Henrys Original IPA, etc. Though bearing the name IPA these session bitters are not strong or hoppy. This is the most common strength of bitter sold in British pubs. According to the Statistical Handbook of the British Beer and Pub Association, it accounts for 16.9% of pub sales.

Best or regular bitter

Strength between 4.2% and 4.7% abv. According to the Statistical Handbook of the British Beer and Pub Association, bitter above 4.2% abv accounts for just 2.9% of pub sales.

Premium or strong bitter

Strength of 4.8% abv and over. Also known as *extra special bitter*, or in the USA, *ESB* (*ESB* is a brand name in the UK).

Light ale

Light ale is a crisply carbonated, low hopped, low abv bottled bitter that is mainly used as a mix with another beer, but is sometimes used as a low alcohol beer.

Bitter outside Britain

The term *pale ale* or *ESB* is more commonly used in the United States. Where *bitter* is used it indicates a pale ale of lower alcohol content brewed in a less hop-focused style than typical American pale ales. American bitters often use British varieties of hops. In Australia, *bitter* is used for several popular Australian lagers such as *Victoria Bitter*.

Hopback Summer Lightening

A trendsetter in the brewing industry; the original Summer ale brewed all year round. An extremely pleasant bitter, straw coloured beer with a terrific fresh, hoppy aroma. This, coupled with an intense bitterness, leads to an excellent long, dry finish. Probably the beer to receive the most awards in Britain!



Whitbread Pale Ale

This bog-standard, bottom-of-the-range, who-in-their-right-mind-would-buy-this ale carries the delightful legend ‘Specially brewed in Scotland’. It has a pleasing pale ale colour, with a bubbly head that puts up a brave fight before subsiding. Its aroma is faintly hoppy, powdery and feeble - it is also slightly suggestive of a cheap lager, such as might be served in an Indian restaurant. On the palate it is quite bitter, metallic and even perhaps smoky in the attack, but is otherwise gassy and thin, with little discernible flavour and practically no aftertaste. Basically, your granny could drink it all night but would probably choose not to. The kindest words we could find were that it is not that offensive and is a pretty colour. Barring these qualities, it's a large, cheap bottle of very bland, boring, dumbed-down watery beer.



Gale's Hordean Special Bitter

First brewed in 1959 this is a good steady bitter with no twists and turns—solid, unpretentious and quite pleasant. A well balanced mix of dark fruit/ginger spice and clean, powerful, but not overbearing hoppy bitterness from the Maris Otter malt and Goldings, Fuggles, Challenger hops. Though full bodied, there is a twisted tin twang which may be the result of the container. George Gale & Co. was established as a pub brewery in 1847 and is now one of the largest independent brewers in Hampshire. Nothing remarkable, but a very pleasant cheap beer.



Moondog Ale

Light copper colored body with an everlasting, thick white head. Lots of lacing. Very subdued malt/hop aroma. Slight sourness in the aroma too. Malt and hops are balanced perfectly. Nice malt upfront with just the right floral hop bite. Yeast seems more pronounced at the beginning. Toasted malt comes through more as the beer warms.

