



The Herald Tribune



Volume #24 Issue #2

Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

February 2010

February Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday February 12th. It will be hosted by **Alex and Claudia Pettit**. See the map and directions on the next page.

Bitter

Bitter is a British term for pale ale. It varies in strength from Boys Bitters under 3% abv to 7% abv strong bitters and in appearance from dark amber to golden ales.

By 1830, the expressions bitter and pale ale were synonymous in England[2] where breweries would tend to designate beers as pale ale, though customers in the pub would commonly refer to the same beers as bitter.

AABG 2010

January	Randy deBeauclair	BBBW
February	Alex and Claudia Pettit ...	English Brown Ales*
March	Liberty St Brewing Co. ...	American Ales*
April	Extract Beers*
May	Stephen Krebs	Cider/Specialty
June	Mark Zadvinskis	Wheat
July	Mead*
August	Patti Smith Jeff Bletch ...	Sour Ale*
September	Jeff Renner	Oktoberfest
October	Strong Ale
November	Chris Frey	Porter/Stout
December	Rolf Wucherer	I.P.A.

* Denotes AHA Club Only Competition Style

All meeting 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

Newsletter: steve darnell • 734.487.4045 • zootalure11@yahoo.com

English Brown Ale

11A. Mild

11B. Southern English Brown Ale

11C. Northern English Brown Ale

Aroma: Light, sweet malt aroma with toffee, nutty and/or caramel notes. A light but appealing fresh hop aroma (UK varieties) may also be noticed. A light fruity ester aroma may be evident in these beers, but should not dominate. Very low to no diacetyl.

Appearance: Dark amber to reddish-brown color. Clear. Low to moderate off-white to light tan head.

Flavor: Gentle to moderate malt sweetness, with a nutty, lightly caramelly character and a medium-dry to dry finish. Malt may also have a toasted, biscuity, or toffee-like character. Medium to medium-low bitterness. Malt-hop balance is nearly even, with hop flavor low to none (UK varieties). Some fruity esters can be present; low diacetyl (especially butterscotch) is optional but acceptable.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

Overall Impression: Drier and more hop-oriented than southern English brown ale, with a nutty character rather than caramel.

History/Comments: English brown ales are generally split into sub-styles along geographic lines.

Ingredients: English mild ale or pale ale malt base with caramel malts. May also have small amounts darker malts (e.g., chocolate) to provide color and the nutty character. English hop varieties are most authentic. Moderate carbonate water.

Vital Statistics

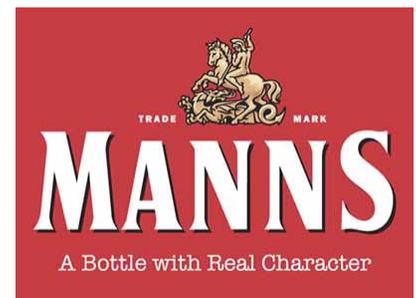
OG . . .	1.040 – 1.052
FG . . .	1.008 – 1.013
IBUs	20 – 30
ABV	4.2 – 5.4%
SRM	12 – 22

Commercial Examples: Newcastle Brown Ale, Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale, Riggwelter Yorkshire Ale, Wychwood Hobgoblin, Tröegs Rugged Trail Ale, Alesmith Nautical Nut Brown Ale, Avery Ellie's Brown Ale, Goose Island Nut Brown Ale, Samuel Adams Brown Ale.

History

In the eighteenth century, British brown ales were brewed to a variety of strengths, with gravities ranging from around 1060° to 1090°. These beers died out around 1800 as brewers moved away from using brown malt as a base. Pale malt, being cheaper because of its higher yield, was used as a base for all beers, including Porter and Stout.

The term "brown ale" was revived at the end of the nineteenth century when London brewer Mann introduced a beer with that name. However, the style only became widely-brewed in the 1920s. The brown ales of this period were considerably stronger than most modern English versions. In 1926, Mann's Brown Ale had a gravity of 1043° and an ABV of around 4%. Whitbread Double Brown was even stronger, 1054° and more than 5% ABV. The introduction of these beers coincided with a big increase in demand for bottled beer in the UK.



In the 1930s some breweries, such as Whitbread, introduced a second weaker and cheaper brown ale that was sometimes just a sweetened version of dark Mild. These beers had a gravity of around 1037°.

After World War II, stronger brown ales, with the exception of a handful of examples from the North East of England, mostly died out. The majority were in the range 1030–1035°, or around 3% ABV, much like Mann's Brown Ale today.

North American brown ales trace their heritage to American home brewing adaptations of certain northern English beers.

History continued on next page...

When and Where

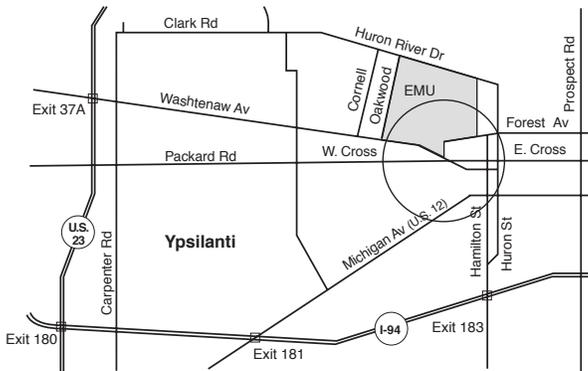
Friday, Feb. 12, 7:30 pm

Alex and Claudia Pettit

945 Sheridan

Ypsilanti MI

480.2714

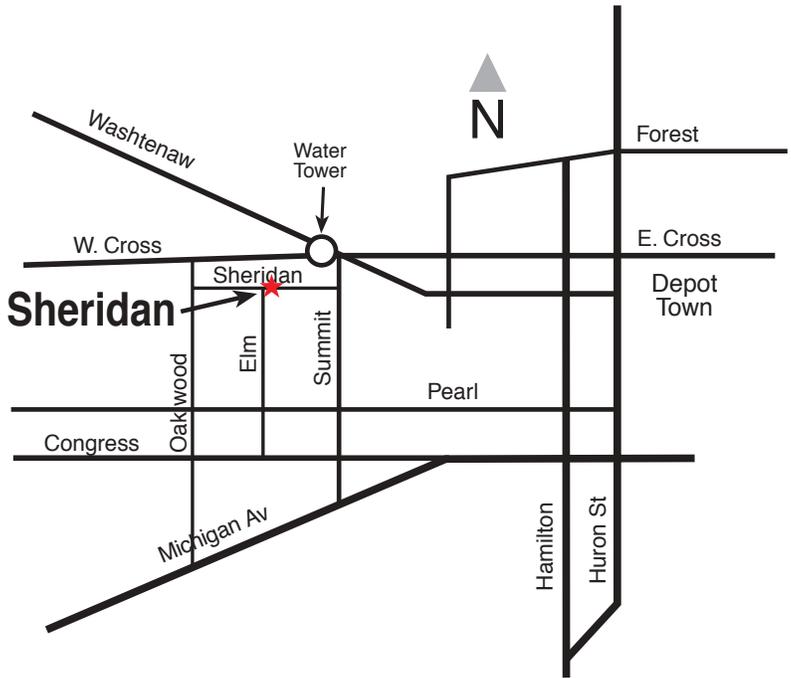


Directions

Its the big purple house on the corner of Sheridan and Elm.

On Sheridan, the first street south of Cross, between Summit and Oakwood.

945 Sheridan



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.

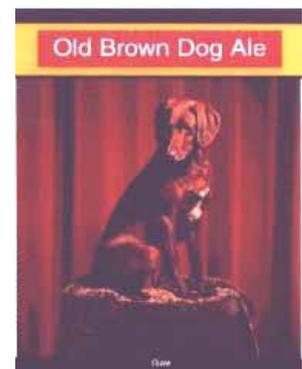
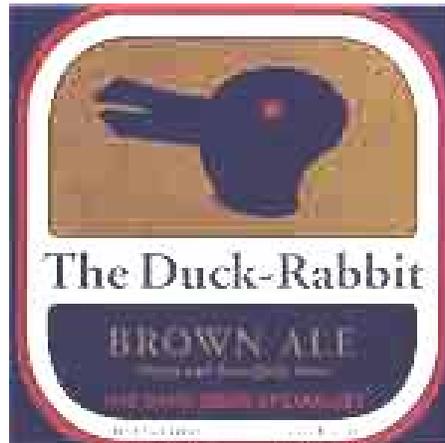
... History continued

Description

English brown ales range from beers such as Manns Original Brown Ale, which is quite sweet and low in alcohol, to North Eastern brown ale such as Newcastle Brown Ale, Double Maxim and Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale.

They range from deep amber to brown in colour. Caramel and chocolate flavours are evident. Brown ales from northeastern England tend to be strong and malty, often nutty, while those from southern England are usually darker, sweeter and lower in alcohol. North American brown ales are usually drier than their English counterparts, with a slight citrus accent and an aroma, bitterness, and medium body due to American varieties of hops. Fruitness from esters are subdued. When chilled to cold temperatures, some haziness may be noticed.

North American commercial examples include Pete's Wicked Ale, Smuttynose Old Brown Dog Ale, Bell's Best Brown Ale, Abita Turbo Dog, Duck-Rabbit Brown Ale, Sam Adams Brown Ale, Saint Arnold Brewing Company Brown Ale, and Brooklyn Brown Ale.



Mild ale

Mild ale is a low-gravity beer with a predominantly malty palate that originated in Britain in the 1600s or earlier. Modern mild ales are mainly dark coloured with an abv of 3% to 3.6%, though there are lighter hued examples, as well as stronger examples reaching 6% abv and higher.

The term *mild* originally meant young beer or ale as opposed to “stale” aged beer or ale with its resulting “tang”. In more recent times it has been interpreted as denoting “mildly hopped”.

Light mild is generally similar, but pale in colour. There is some overlap between the weakest styles of bitter and light mild, with the term AK being used to refer to both. The designation of such beers as “bitter” or “mild” has tended to change with fashion. A good example is McMullen’s AK, which was re-badged as a bitter after decades as a light mild. AK — a very common beer name in the 1800s - was often referred to as a “mild bitter beer” interpreting “mild” as “unaged”.



Once sold in every pub, mild experienced a catastrophic fall in popularity after the 1960s and was in danger of completely disappearing. However, in recent years the explosion of microbreweries has led to a modest renaissance and an increasing number of milds (sometimes labelled ‘Dark’) are now being brewed.

History

“Mild” was originally used to designate any beer which was young or unaged and did not refer to a specific style of beer. Thus there was Mild Ale but also Mild Porter and even Mild Bitter Beer. These young beers were often blended with aged “stale” beer to improve their flavour. As the 19th century progressed and public taste moved away from the aged taste, unblended young beer, mostly in the form of Mild Ale or Light Bitter Beer, began to dominate the market.

In the 19th century a typical brewery produced three or four mild ales, usually designated by a number of X’s, the weakest being X, the strongest XXXX. They were considerably

stronger than the milds of today, with the gravity ranging from around 1.055 to 1.072 (about 5.5% to 7% abv). Gravities dropped throughout the late 1800s and by 1914 the weakest milds were down to about 1.045, still considerably stronger than modern versions.

The draconian measures applied to the brewing industry during the First World War had a particularly dramatic effect upon mild. As the biggest-selling beer, it suffered the largest cut in gravity when breweries had to limit the average OG of their beer to 1.030. In order to be able to produce some stronger beer — which was exempt from price controls and thus more profitable — mild was reduced to 1.025 or lower. At that strength, it could scarcely be considered an intoxicating drink.

Modern dark mild varies from dark amber to near-black in colour and is very light-bodied. Its flavour is dominated by malt, sometimes with roasty notes derived from the use of black malt, with a subdued hop character, though there are some quite bitter examples. Most are in the range 1.030–1.036 (3–3.6% abv).

Light mild is generally similar, but paler in colour. Some dark milds are created by the addition of caramel to a pale beer.

Until the 1950s, mild was the largest selling ale. It retains some popularity in the West Midlands, Wales and North West England, but has been totally ousted by bitter and lager in the South of England. In 2002 only 1.3% of beer sold in pubs was Mild. Mild’s popularity in Wales, in particular, persisted



as a relatively low-alcohol, sweet drink for coal miners. Outside the United Kingdom, Mild is virtually unknown, with the exception of Old in New South Wales and some microbrewery recreations in North America and Scandinavia.

Brewing

Mild ales are generally based on mild malt or pale malt. Light milds contain, in addition, a quantity of crystal malt; dark milds, meanwhile, make use of chocolate malt, black malt or dark brewing sugars. Milds

tend to be lightly-hopped compared to pale ale and are usually in low alcohol; strong mild ales used to reach six or seven per cent abv, but very few such beers are still brewed. Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild, brewed to a pre-WWI recipe, is a rare example of a strong Mild (6.0% ABV).

Examples of mild ales

- Banks’s Original
- Brains Dark (3.5%; Bronze medal winner in Mild category at 2007 Great British Beer Festival)
- Cains Dark Mild
- Castle Rock Black Gold (3.5%)
- Highgate Mild
- Hobsons (Dark) Mild (3.2%) and Postman’s Knock (available bottle-conditioned only; 4.8%)
- Holt’s Mild
- Greene King XX Mild (3%)
- Robinson’s Brewery - Hatter’s Mild
- Nottingham Rock Mild (3.8%; Silver medal winner in Mild category at 2007 Great British Beer Festival)
- Rudgate Ruby Mild (4.4%; voted the best beer in Britain - CAMRA’s Champion Beer of Britain 2009)
- Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild (6%; award winner in Old Ale & Strong Mild category at 26th Cambridge Beer Festival)
- Tetley’s Mild (3.3%)
- Theakston’s Mild (3.5%)
- Thwaites Dark Mild
- Timothy Taylor’s Golden Best (3.5%; a light mild)
- Timothy Taylor’s Dark Mild
- Woodforde’s Mardler

The Session Beer

By Noah Davis • Jun 10th, 2009 • Category: real beer
— *By Zak Stambor*

While extreme beers, like ultra-rare Russian imperial stouts, viscous bourbon barrel-aged double stouts, or inordinately hoppy double IPAs garner the spotlight, there’s a craft beer counter-movement quietly brewing in the shadows.

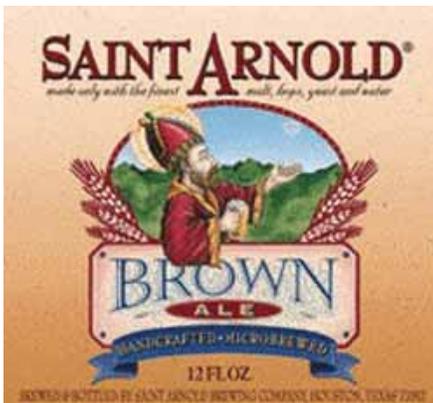
Session beers — a wide range of lagers and ales that are ideal for extended drinking sessions in that they check in roughly around or below 5 percent alcohol by volume (ABV) and are well-balanced between malty sweetness and hoppy bitterness in order to offer (Bud Light catchphrase be damned) high drinkability — are finally getting some respect both from brewers and imbibers.

Session continued on next page...

... *Session continued*

The reason is twofold, says Greg Hall, brewmaster at Chicago's Goose Island Brewery. The number of craft beer drinkers continues to grow exponentially, which means there are more people drinking all styles of microbrew beer. But also, extreme beers are often too extreme — both in flavor and ABV — to drink all the time.

"I love Bourbon County Stout but most of the time when I have it, it's one and done," says Hall of his brewery's 13 percent ABV bourbon



barrel-aged imperial stout that the brewery's Web site claims has more flavor in one sip than your average case of beer.

With a session beer, like Goose Island's Honker's Ale, a 5 percent English-style bitter, Hall can have a few pints when he gets home from work without forcing his taste buds to work overtime and his wife to wake him for dinner.

"Craft beer drinkers can't just drink double IPAs and Dark Lord [Three Floyds' Russian Imperial Stout] all the time," he says. "If you want to have a beer with flavor, and you want to stay in craft beers, you need to reach for a session beer for a day when you're cutting the lawn or watching a ballgame."

Session Beer Project

If there's a ringleader to this quiet counter-revolution, that man would be Lew Bryson, a Philadelphia-based drinks writer who mans the blog, "Seen Through a Glass."

At a barleywine festival in 1998 Bryson found his calling while drinking a pint of cask-conditioned Young's Old Nick Barley Wine Ale.

"It was so damn good that I thought to myself, 'I wish this was 3.7 percent so I could drink it all afternoon,'" he says. "And that's

when I realized that that's really what I want — a beer with a lot of flavor that I can drink a lot of."

Nearly 10 years passed before he decided to make embark on the quest for the best low-alcohol, full-flavored pints with the January 2007 launch of the Session Beer Project. Bryson describes the venture as a "non-profit, unorganized, unofficial effort to popularize and support the brewing and enjoyment of session beers."

Seven months later he helped organize what very well may have been the first-ever beer festival devoted to session beers, the three-day Ziegler'sville, Penn.-based Session Summer of Love in which all the beers were 5.5 percent ABV or less. Then, this year he launched the Session Beer Project Web site and dubbed 2009, "The Year of the Session."

These efforts aim to raise the profile of less alcoholic, less extreme beers, like Yards Brewing Company's Brawler Pugilist Style Ale and Harpoon Brewery's Brown Session Ale. He hopes that with more attention, brewers will brew more session beers, restaurants and bars will carry more of them and beer drinkers will drink, and appreciate, more of them — especially since subtle beers require just as much, if not more, skill to brew than the extreme beers.

"It seems like all we ever talk about is the latest outrageous beer," he says. "I'm not anti-big extreme beers. I love them. But I also get bored by them because often they offer the same whack in the head with a different label."

One reason that extreme beers continue receiving attention, he says, is that they boldly stand in such stark contrast to macrobeers like Budweiser and Miller Genuine Draft.

"The beers that bored beer drinkers and drove them to craft beers were bland lager beers," Bryson explains. "And now people just assume that all lagers or lower alcohol ales suck. To be fair and honest, a lot of lower alcohol craft beers have sucked, but that's not necessarily the case anymore."

In fact, there are some like Tom Kehoe, founder and brewmaster of Philadelphia's Yards Brewing Company who are focused on brewing beers that can be someone's "everyday beer."

"Not every beer we brew is meant to knock someone's socks off because you can't drink that all the time," he says. "We're not looking to do anything crazy, just brew a good beer that you can have a few of every day."

Attention to Detail

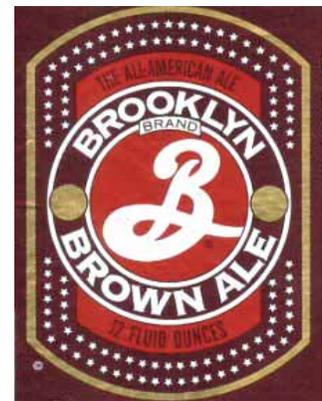
Truly appreciating session beers requires an attention to subtlety, says Kehoe.

While they can — and should be — full in flavor, they can't overwhelm the palette so that you can't have just one or two.

That's the reason Kehoe named his 4.2 percent English dark mild ale Brawler since "you can go a few rounds with it."

The challenge of brewing a beer like Brawler, he says, is that it has both "mild" and "dark" in its name.

"Mild beers have these negative connotations," he says. "And people run away from anything that's close to mass-produced macrobeer — whether in alcohol content or subtlety. I think that's what has happened to milds and bitters [traditional English-style beers]. They're just everyday kind of drinks. And isn't that what we're supposed to do? Drink a beer a day."



While session beers may be every day-types of beverages, ensuring their consistency is not. They require absolute precision, says Goose Island's Hall.

"Anyone can order a pound of Amarillo hops and make a beer pretty hoppy and delicious," he says. "Obviously some are better at that than others, but when you add all those hops you can cover up your flaws and inconsistencies. But with a 20 IBU [International Bitterness Units scale which provides a measure of bitterness in beer — from 5 IBU American lagers to 100-plus double IPAs] the beer has to be clean. People can taste the difference."