

# The Herald Tribune



Volume # 24 Issue # 3

Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

March 2010

## March Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday March 12th. It will be hosted by **Jack Carr**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is American Ales.\*



## AABG 2010

January .....	Randy deBeauclair .....	BBBW
February .....	Alex and Claudia Pettit ...	English Brown Ales*
March .....	Jack Carr .....	American Ales*
April .....	.....	Extract Beers*
May .....	Stephen Krebs .....	Cider/Specialty
June .....	Mark Zadvinskis .....	Wheat
July .....	Roger Burns .....	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

## 10. AMERICAN ALE

- 10A. American Pale Ale
- 10B. American Amber Ale
- 10C. American Brown Ale

### 10A. American Pale Ale

**Aroma:** Usually moderate to strong hop aroma from dry hopping or late kettle additions of American hop varieties. A citrusy hop character is very common, but not required. Low to moderate maltiness supports the hop presentation, and may optionally show small amounts of specialty malt character (bready, toasty, biscuity). Fruity esters vary from moderate to none. No diacetyl. Dry hopping (if used) may add grassy notes, although this character should not be excessive.

**Appearance:** Pale golden to deep amber. Moderately large white to off-white head with good retention. Generally quite clear, although dry-hopped versions may be slightly hazy.

**Flavor:** Usually a moderate to high hop flavor, often showing a citrusy American hop character (although other hop varieties may be used). Low to moderately high clean malt character supports the hop presentation, and may optionally show small amounts of specialty malt character (bready, toasty, biscuity). The balance is typically towards the late hops and bitterness, but the malt presence can be substantial. Caramel flavors are usually restrained or absent. Fruity esters can be moderate to none. Moderate to high hop bitterness with a medium to dry finish. Hop flavor and bitterness often lingers into the finish. No diacetyl. Dry hopping (if used) may add grassy notes, although this character should not be excessive.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Carbonation moderate to high. Overall smooth finish without astringency often associated with high hopping rates.

**Overall Impression:** Refreshing and hoppy, yet with sufficient supporting malt.

**History:** An American adaptation of English pale ale, reflecting indigenous ingredients

(hops, malt, yeast, and water). Often lighter in color, cleaner in fermentation by-products, and having less caramel flavors than English counterparts.

**Comments:** There is some overlap in color between American pale ale and American amber ale. The American pale ale will generally be cleaner, have a less caramelly malt profile, less body, and often more finishing hops.

**Ingredients:** Pale ale malt, typically American two-row. American hops, often but not always ones with a citrusy character. American ale yeast. Water can vary in sulfate content, but carbonate content should be relatively low. Specialty grains may add character and complexity, but generally make up a relatively small portion of the grist. Grains that add malt flavor and richness, light sweetness, and toasty or bready notes are often used (along with late hops) to differentiate brands.

### Vital Statistics:

OG . . . .	1.045-1.060
FG . . . .	1.010-1.015
IBUs . . . . .	30-45+
SRM . . . . .	5-14
ABV . . . . .	4.5-6%

**Commercial Examples:** Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Stone Pale Ale, Great Lakes Burning River Pale Ale, Full Sail Pale Ale, Three Floyds X-Tra Pale Ale, Anderson Valley Poleeko Gold Pale Ale, Left Hand Brewing Jackman's Pale Ale, Pyramid Pale Ale, Deschutes Mirror Pond.

## APA History

Pale ale is the prototypical English beer style, born at the dawn of the Industrial Age and popularized at the height of empire. It is also a style of beer that almost completely disappeared from the United States in the 20th century. If not for America's fledgling microbrewery movement which began in the 1980s, this classic style might have become an obscure choice favored only by British tourists and hard-core anglophiles.

*Histroy continued on next page...*

## When and Where

Friday March 12, 7:30 pm

Jack Carr

201 North Prospect

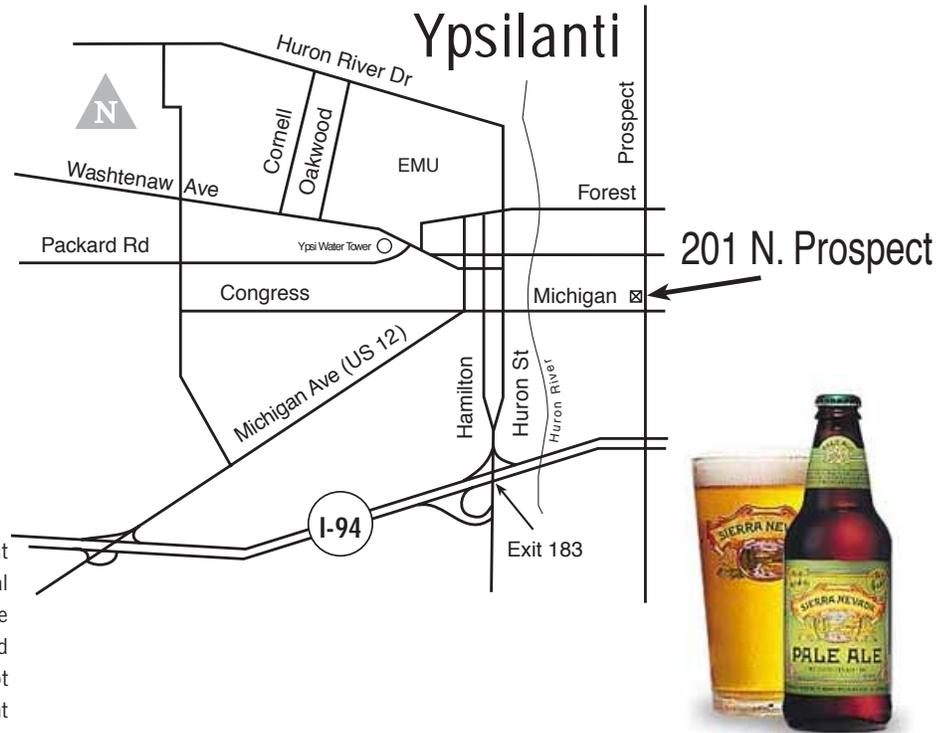
Ypsilanti MI

### 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.



### ... History continued

Craft brewers embraced pale ales from the start, but they didn't stop at re-creating English versions. They soon combined distinctive North American ingredients and characteristic American brashness to create a new, distinctly American variant of the style.

Compared to its old world relative, American pale ale delivers a more pronounced hop character. Built atop a solid bitterness, the typical new world pale ale has a decidedly bolder hop flavor and aroma. American pale ale (APA) is now a brewpub and microbrewery staple. With its amber hue, medium body, firm bitterness, all-malt complexity, and wonderfully floral aroma, APA is truly a beer style for all seasons.

Whether you're meeting friends at your local pub, hosting a backyard barbecue, or enjoying an elegant restaurant meal, APA never seems to be out of place. Best of all, you rarely need to look far for a great APA. Chances are there's one brewed in your community and that your favorite beer store offers many to choose from.

Some craft-brewed examples of American Pale Ale include Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Firestone Pale Ale, Goose Island Honker's Ale, Great Lakes Burning River Pale Ale, Left Hand Jackman's Pale Ale, Deschutes Mirror Pond Pale Ale, Full Sail Pale Ale, Pyramid Pale Ale, Anderson Valley Poleeko Gold Pale Ale, Mendocino Blue Heron Pale Ale, Harpoon Ale, Stone Pale Ale, and many more.

### Flavors

American pale ales are renowned for their distinctive hop flavor and aroma, which are most often described as citrusy and floral. The signature hop is the Cascade, a variety that has become so prevalent in the style that a brand may stand out if it doesn't include them. Given the overall similarity in hop character, many craft brewers now try to differentiate their beers by modifying their hop schedules or opting for a blend of other domestic hops. When sampling APA's during American Beer Month, see if you can identify the unique Cascade hop character in different brands while also looking for subtle distinctions in malt-hop balance. Also try to single out other hop varieties if they are used.

### The 4 C's

While Cascade is the most common hop variety employed, there are other domestic varieties that also share the characteristic resinous, citrus-like flavor and aroma that many perceive as being like grapefruit. Through strange coincidence, the most popular are Centennial, Chinook, and Columbus. Along with Cascade, these are frequently referred to in the beer industry as "the four 'C' hops." All of these provide an intense, unabashedly American, hop character.

When a brewer moves beyond the "four C's" in an American pale ale, he or she often chooses a variety more commonly used in English ales. These are often described as more earthy and herbal than American types, but they also have very distinctive fruity notes, akin to orange peel, lemon, or apricot. East Kent Golding, Fuggle, and Challenger are quite popular, as is the Styrian Golding.

Perhaps most fascinating is the fact that many English craft brewers are increasingly choosing the same 'C' hops their American colleagues use. Will the distinctions between American and English pale ales eventually fade away? Only time will tell!

... *History continued*

### Food Pairing

American pale ale is a very sociable beer on its own, but it is also quite versatile as a complement for a variety of foods. If all you want is a nosh, APA is great when paired with an assortment of hard aged cheddar cheeses.

The sky's the limit when it comes to main courses, however. Like its venerated English cousin, APA is perfect with roast beef, prime rib, and savory lamb dishes. Yet it is also surprisingly good with fried seafood (even the classic English fish and chips) and rich-tasting poultry like goose, duck, or dark-meat turkey. But for many, the piece de resistance is grilled steak, hot and juicy from the backyard barbecue. What could be more American than an old-fashioned Independence Day cook-out and a smorgasbord of craft-brewed American pales?

### AAA History

Since 1980, upstart American craft brewers have rescued many classic beer styles from oblivion. At the same time, they have adapted selected styles and in the process created entirely new ones. American Amber Ale is one of these fusion beers: a combination of old world tradition and American innovation.

We often define amber ale by comparison to closely related beer styles. The typical example presents more mouth-filling body and tongue-pleasing malt flavor than the typical English and American pale ales. Amber ales may also offer a more floral, hop accented take on Irish Red Ale. The outgrowth of this fusion artfully combines the subtlety of British ales with the brashness of American craft brewing.

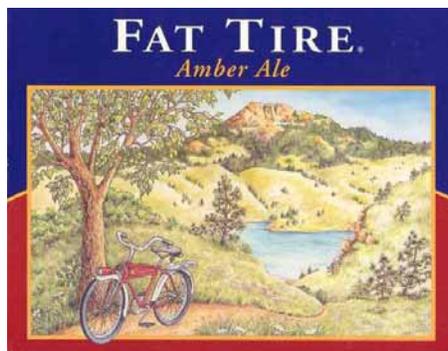
West coast brewers pioneered American amber, but they didn't monopolize it. Great American amber ales are available coast-to-coast. Local beers are inevitably the freshest, so seek out the amber ales produced by the breweries nearest you. And when you travel, make sure to sample brands from a local brewpub or microbrewery.

Some craft-brewed examples of American Amber Ale include Anderson Valley Boont Amber Ale, Avery Redpoint Ale, Bell's Amber, Carolina Copperline Amber Ale, Deschutes Cinder Cone Red Ale, Full Sail Amber Ale, HopTown Paint the Town Red, McNeill's Firehouse Amber Ale, Mendocino Red Tail

Ale, New Belgium Fat Tire Amber Ale, North Coast Red Seal Ale, Rogue American Amber, Saint Arnold Amber Ale, Shipyard Winter Ale, and many more.

### Flavors

American amber is noteworthy for its relatively even balance between malt and hop expression. This is quite unusual, and not only for newer American beer styles. In most instances balance does not imply equal proportions of sweetness and bitterness (malt and hop). On the contrary, it should be judged solely in terms of the appropriateness for its style. For example, pale ale is typically dry and assertively bitter, not sweet and malty. On the other hand, brown ale tends to have more malt sweetness and toastiness, with decidedly less hop expression. The proper



balance for each is quite different. In amber ales, hops and malts mesh almost perfectly - both are evident, but neither dominates.

American amber is also distinguished from its American pale ale parent by its fuller body and mouthfeel. Much of this comes from the liberal use of crystal malt, which not only contributes a pronounced caramelly sweetness, but also the style's signature red color. Not surprisingly, crystal is alternatively known as caramel malt. There are actually multiple types of crystal malt, each produced to a specific color rating (designated by degrees Lovibond, or L°). Most brewers opt for darker crystal malts, rated at 120 L° or higher. Although the base malt is routinely domestic 2-row pale, imported crystal malts have grown in popularity. Belgian Special B is a highly prized dark crystal malt, noted for its highly caramelized and nutty flavor. Occasionally Munich or Vienna malts may also be employed for a deeper color and a toastier character. Just because this is an "American" style doesn't mean that brewers must restrict themselves to domestic ingredients.

That same impartiality also applies to hops. While citrusy Northwest hops like Cascades are most common, many brewers prefer a combination of American and European varieties, specifically those types that contribute a telltale spiciness. English Golding and German Tettngang are favorites. Some newer domestic varieties, like Amarillo, are valued for much the same reason. In classic fashion, American craft brewers continue to take advantage of the best ingredients from around the world in the development of new styles.

### Food Pairing

The characteristic malt-hop balance of American amber lends itself to popular foods from almost any cuisine. Few beers have the agility to stand up to a spicy, garlicky pizza or a half-pound burger hot off the grill, but American amber has just the right blend of sweetness and spice to work in either instance.

It's a good all-around style for hearty dishes, from an open-faced hot roast beef sandwich to a savory lamb stew or a big bowl of chili. And it matches equally well with cheddar, smoked, or dry aged cheeses. If your backyard barbecue calls for a variety of grilled meats, make sure to stock a good supply of American amber. You can also surprise your friends by substituting it for Vienna or Munich-style lagers when you're serving Mexican food.

### More 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 wasn't until around 1703 that the term *pale ale* was first used. By 1784 advertisements 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*, except those from Burton on Trent, which tend to be referred to as pale ales regardless of the method of dispatch.