



# The Herald Tribune



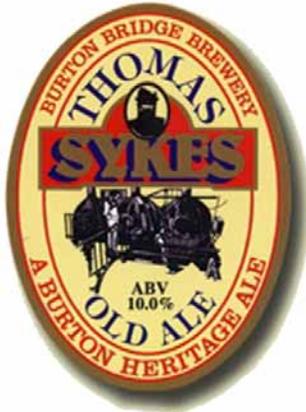
Volume #24 Issue #10

Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

October 2010

## October Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG Friday October 8th. It will be hosted by **Stephen Krebs**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **Strong Ale**.



## AABG 2010

January .....	Randy deBeauclair .....	BBBW
February ....	Alex and Claudia Pettit .....	English Brown Ales*
March .....	Jack Carr .....	American Ales*
April .....	Brad Sancho OG Brewing ....	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 .....	Stephen Krebs .....	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 club's pico system is available to members for brewing. If you wish to borrow it contact Mike O'Brien at:

734.637.2532

picobrew@comcast.net

Access the AABG Club System forum at:

<http://tinyurl.com/29h7yxc>

## 19. STRONG ALE

19A. Old Ale

19C. American Barleywine

19B. English Barleywine

**Aroma:** Very rich and strongly malty, often with a caramel-like aroma. May have moderate to strong fruitiness, often with a dried-fruit character. English hop aroma may range from mild to assertive. Alcohol aromatics may be low to moderate, but never harsh, hot or solventy. The intensity of these aromatics often subsides with age. The aroma may have a rich character including bready, toasty, toffee, molasses, and/or treacle notes. Aged versions may have a sherry-like quality, possibly vinous or port-like aromatics, and generally more muted malt aromas. Low to no diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Color may range from rich gold to very dark amber or even dark brown. Often has ruby highlights, but should not be opaque. Low to moderate off-white head; may have low head retention. May be cloudy with chill haze at cooler temperatures, but generally clears to good to brilliant clarity as it warms. The color may appear to have great depth, as if viewed through a thick glass lens. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in "legs" when beer is swirled in a glass.

**Flavor:** Strong, intense, complex, multi-layered malt flavors ranging from bready and biscuity through nutty, deep toast, dark caramel, toffee, and/or molasses. Moderate to high malty sweetness on the palate, although the finish may be moderately sweet to moderately dry (depending on aging). Some oxidative or vinous flavors may be present, and often complex alcohol flavors should be evident. Alcohol flavors shouldn't be harsh, hot or solventy. Moderate to fairly high fruitiness, often with a dried-fruit character. Hop bitterness may range from just enough for balance to a firm presence; balance therefore ranges from malty to somewhat bitter. Low to moderately high hop flavor (usually UK varieties). Low to no diacetyl.

**Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied and chewy, with a velvety, luscious texture (although the body may decline with long conditioning). A smooth

warmth from aged alcohol should be present, and should not be hot or harsh. Carbonation may be low to moderate, depending on age and conditioning.

**Overall Impression:** The richest and strongest of the English Ales. A showcase of malty richness and complex, intense flavors. The character of these ales can change significantly over time; both young and old versions should be appreciated for what they are. The malt profile can vary widely; not all examples will have all possible flavors or aromas.

**History:** Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, and in recent years many commercial examples are now vintage-dated. Normally aged significantly prior to release. Often associated with the winter or holiday season.

**Comments:** Although often a hoppy beer, the English Barleywine places less emphasis on hop character than the American Barleywine and features English hops. English versions can be darker, maltier, fruitier, and feature richer specialty malt flavors than American Barleywines.

**Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt should form the backbone of the grist, with judicious amounts of caramel malts. Dark malts should be used with great restraint, if at all, as most of the color arises from a lengthy boil. English hops such as Northdown, Target, East Kent Goldings and Fuggles. Characterful English yeast.

### Vital Statistics:

OG: . . 1.080 - 1.120  
 FG: . . 1.018 - 1.030  
 IBUs: . . . . . 35 - 70  
 ABV: . . . . . 8 - 12%  
 SRM: . . . . . 8 - 22

**Commercial Examples:** Thomas Hardy's Ale, Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes Old Ale, J.W. Lee's Vintage Harvest Ale, Robinson's Old Tom, Fuller's Golden Pride, AleSmith Old Numbskull, Young's Old Nick (unusual in its 7.2% ABV), Whitbread Gold Label, Old Dominion Millennium, North Coast Old Stock Ale (when aged), Weyerbacher Blithering Idiot

## WHEN AND WHERE

**Friday, Oct. 8, 7:30pm**

**Stephen Krebs**

**207 Montgomery Ave**

**Ann Arbor, MI**

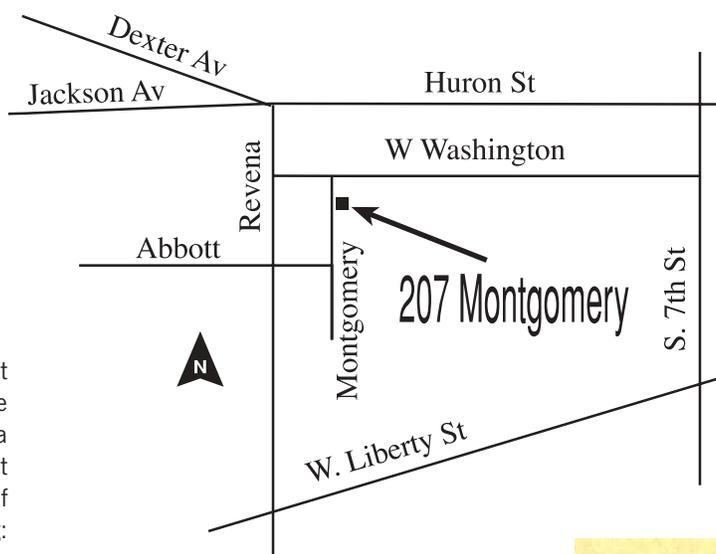
**734 747 7033**

### Directions

Stephen Krebs's house is located on the East side of Montgomery and is the third house from the corner of West Washington. It is a grey house with white trim and a big front porch. You can park on the West side of Montgomery, but not on the East. Warning: They don't ticket, they tow. There is ample parking on both sides of the street on Washington and Abbott streets.

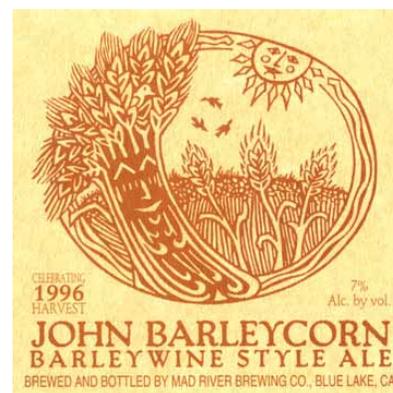
### Guide for New Members

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.



### AABG Policy

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



### American Barleywine

Despite its name, a Barleywine (or Barley Wine) is very much a beer, albeit a very strong and often intense beer! In fact, it's one of the strongest of the beer styles. Lively and fruity, sometimes sweet, sometimes bittersweet, but always alcoholic. A brew of this strength and complexity can be a challenge to the palate. Expect anything from an amber to dark brown colored beer, with aromas ranging from intense fruits to intense hops. Body is typically thick, alcohol will definitely be perceived, and flavors can range from dominant fruits to palate smacking, resinous hops.

English varieties are quite different from the American efforts, what sets them apart is usually the American versions are insanely hopped to make for a more bitter and hop flavored brew, typically using American high alpha oil hops. English versions tend to be more rounded and balanced between malt and hops, with a slightly lower alcohol content, though this is not always the case. Most

Barleywines can be cellared for years and typically age like wine. Average alcohol by volume (abv) range: 8.0-15.0%

Most barley wines range in colour from amber to deep reddish-browns, though until the introduction of Whitbread Gold Label in the 1950s, British barley wines were always dark in colour. All are rich and full-flavored.

Writer Michael Jackson referred to a barley wine by Smithwick's thus: "This is very distinctive, with an earthy hoppiness, a wineyness, lots of fruit and toffee flavours." He also noted that its original gravity is 1.062.

According to Martyn Cornell, "no historically meaningful difference exists between barley wines and old ales."

The highest strength Belgian beer 'Bush' has often been said to resemble a barley wine rather than more traditional Belgian styles.

### Mad River Brewing Co.

Brew Master Bob Smith's dream to open a small brewery specializing in craft beers started in the late seventies. In 1977 Bob became a member of the original group that founded the "Humbrewers Guild". Excursions to buy brewing supplies led Bob to Ken Grossman's Homebrew Shop in Chico, California. After Ken shared his plans to build a brewery in Chico to be called Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Bob became determined to found a similar brewery in Humboldt County. Bob's contact with Ken becomes pivotal in the founding of Mad River. In the spring of 1989 Sierra Nevada, having outgrown its starting brewery and with a new larger plant under construction, offered to sell their original equipment to Smith. At this point the micro brewery business in general had proven its viability and the overall financial climate had changed so financing looked possible. Smith developed a prospectus and by fall found the investors necessary to establish the corporation known as Mad River Brewing Company.

## Thomas Hardy's Ale: Background on a classic

Thomas Hardy's Ale was first brewed in 1968 by the Eldridge Pope Brewery in Dorchester to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of author Thomas Hardy, "Return of the Native", "Tess of the D'Urbervilles." Much of Hardy's work was set in the moors in England's West Country around Dorchester. It was a natural. Borrowing a quote from British beer writer **Roger Protz**

*"Thomas Hardy once described the beer of Dorchester as "the most beautiful colour that the eye of an artist in beer could desire; full in body, yet brisk as a volcano; piquant, yet without a twang; luminous as an autumn sunset; free from streakiness in taste; but, finally, rather heavy." "*

How could I say it better. When Thomas Hardy's Ale was first made – it was the strongest beer in Britain: 11.25 percent alcohol by volume. It slowly became a cult beer in England.

In 1986, George Saxon, of Phoenix Imports, Ellicott City, Maryland, began importing Thomas Hardy's Ale. I got my first sample in 1987: we drank one bottle and put the other in the cellar, where it has remained. But in 1996, the Pope family closed the brewery to concentrate on running pubs. The brand was sold to someone else who created the Thomas Hardy Brewery. But the brewery closed in 2000.

George Saxon had been the beer's best customer. So he scrambled and wound up buying the brand. Then, he found another brewer, O'Hanlon's Brewing, Whimple, Devon, England. Since 2001, they've been producing the beer, much of it for sale in the U.S. by Phoenix Imports. A great ending to a valiant effort by a guy who loves beer.

— Jay R. Brooks



## Recent History

Barley wine is an old-style brew known for its big, aromatic flavors, malty character and high alcohol content. Although individual brews vary, barley wines are rich and viscous with toasty caramel flavors. Typically brewed in limited quantities each winter, barley wines make for interesting, often delicious, cold-weather sipping. But with alcohol levels that range from 7 percent to 12 percent by volume, this isn't tailgate party beer. Like ports and sherries, barley wines are best savored after a meal. And like wine, they develop deeper flavors and character with age.

While Anchor's experiments with ale ultimately led to the highly regarded Liberty Ale, Maytag's experience with barley wine led him to introduce his own version in 1976. The powerful brew was named Old Foghorn, a nod to the English tradition of attaching the word "old" to barley wines to denote their old-school roots and the aging many undergo. "Foghorn" gave it a San Francisco touch. Old Foghorn was the first commercial barley wine made in the United States and it helped spark renewed interest in the brew domestically and in Britain, as well.

"We started it," says Maytag. "A lot of people don't realize that. So you'll forgive us if we seem unduly proud."

Anchor also started a subtle bit of label nomenclature here. Look closely at a bottle of Old Foghorn. It says "barleywine." One word. When Maytag first sought label approval for his barley wine from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, it balked at the use of the word "wine" on something not made from grapes. Recalling a bit of legal arcana, Maytag knew that if the beer was sold only in California, the state would allow him to use a label that hadn't been approved by the feds. To increase his chances with Sacramento regulators, Maytag called his brew "barleywine," running the two words together to hide the offending term. The label read: "Old Foghorn Barleywine Style Ale."

"They bought it," says Maytag. "It worked."

Anchor released its barley wine well before the microbrew revolution of the 1980s. In the ensuing years, other California breweries introduced their own barley wines, following Anchor's lead and labeling them barleywine. But Maytag noticed these other barley wines were being shipped out of the state. Somehow it became OK to sell outside of California and barley wine began to spread.

Today, there are dozens of barley wines produced here and in Britain. Starting on Feb. 21, 2004, San Francisco's Toronado pub on Haight Street will hold its annual Barley Wine Festival, a weeklong event with more than 40 brews on tap.

Barley wines get their big flavors and high alcohol levels from the use of large quantities of malt. More malt means more sugar and more sugar produces more alcohol. Because it's a heavy beer, breweries typically release it in winter months. Humboldt County's Mad River Brewing Co. released its John Barleycorn Barleywine Style Ale in early November. While not a top seller, the barley wine is a favorite among beer aficionados.

"It's a cult thing," says Brian Baku, Mad River's marketing director. "I love one just sitting by the fire after dinner."

John Barleycorn got its name from a poem by Robert Burns about a man who is killed, ground

up and buried, but grows back as barley that's turned into a crowd-pleasing malt beverage. For the last 13 years, the label on John Barleycorn includes a verse inspired by the poem and woodcut art to illustrate the story.

"It's fairly gruesome, but it tells the story of making beer," says Baku.

The brewery made only 450 cases of the ale and aged it six weeks before release. While drinkable now, it will benefit from several months or years of aging. With age, sharp, bitter hop flavors round off, alcohol becomes less noticeable and the ale develops intense, chewy flavors. Many barley wines carry vintage dates for aging, best done in a refrigerator.

Fort Bragg's North Coast Brewing Co. recently released 500 cases of its fourth vintage of Old Stock Ale. Company president and brewmaster Mark Ruedrich calls his brew an old ale instead of a barley wine, a loose distinction. American barley wines generally have higher alcohol contents than their English counterparts and lead with big, floral, hoppy notes. While not low in alcohol, Old Stock Ale is less hoppy than most American barley wines and has a pronounced malt flavor that comes from distinctive Maris Otter malt imported from England.

