

The Herald Tribune

Volume # 27 Issue # 1

Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

January 2013

January Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday January 11th. It will be hosted by **Adventures in Homebrewing**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **Un-Session Beers**. See the note below.

Un-Session Beers?

Hosted by Frank Barickman and the Scioto Olentangy and Darby Zymurgists (SODZ) club of Delaware, OH, this competition covers BJCP categories 1C-E, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6A,C, 7, 8C, 9D-E, 10, 12B-C, 13B-F, 14, 15, 16, 17B, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

For more information, contact Frank Barickman at fbarickm@columbus.rr.com.

AABG 2013

January	Adventures in HB	Un-Session Beers*
February	AiH	Un-Session Beers*
March	AiH	Barleywines*
April .....	.....	Barleywines*
May	Stephen Krebs	Extract Beers*
June .....	.....	Wheat Beers
July BeerBQ	Roger Burns	Mead
August	Chris Frey	TBD*
September .....	.....	European Amber Lager*
October .....	.....	European Amber Lager*
November .....	.....	TBD*
December	Rolf Wucherer	TBD*

* 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>

Un-Session

High Gravity Beer is a long-standing European tradition but it's growing in popularity in the U.S. South Carolina has a special interest as a recent law now allows sales of high gravity beer. High Gravity simply means specialty craft beers with an increased weight of sugar and gravity "pull" in the fermentation process. They are higher in alcohol because they contain more sugar and other ingredients at the start of the brewing process.

High gravity beers are not crafted with the sole intent of a higher alcohol content. The higher percentage of alcohol is due to the different ingredients used because brewers are trying to create complex, flavorful and unique beers. High gravity beers are meant to be sipped and appreciated, even paired with foods like wine. They're more expensive than beers that are mass produced, but with these beers it's about quality, not quantity. There are still only a small amount of U.S. microbreweries that produce high gravity beer. There are approximately 1400 microbreweries in the U.S., but they don't all produce HGB. Some of the styles of beer that are considered high gravity are already quite popular in the states, such as; India Pale Ale, bocks, imperial stouts, barley wine, and many Belgium beers to name a few.

In fact, due to the hard work of the Brewer's Association, American craft beers are now being distributed in Europe in small amounts. Earlier this year Holland's largest beer importer, Bier and Co. imported a selection of U.S. craft beers to distribute in Germany, the Netherlands, U.K., Ireland, Switzerland, Greece, and Italy. This will provide the U.S. breweries with much-needed exposure and hopefully some new-found respect from the old guard breweries.

Session

A British expat and buddy of ours in California once suggested that a "session" referred to one of the two allowable drinking periods in England that were imposed on shell production workers during World War I. Typically the licensed sessions were 11am-3pm and 7pm-11pm, and apparently continued up until the Liquor Licensing Act 1988 was introduced. Workers would find a beer that they could adequately quaff within these restrictive 4-hour "sessions" that were laid down by the government without getting legless and return to work or not get arrested for being drunk and disorderly. Now he could be full of trub, but we've found some smatterings of info to back this up and it sounds like a fine origin of the term to us.



Sessionable beers of the time might have been a cask-conditioned offering, Mild or Bitter, at 3 to 4 percent alcohol by volume (ABV), but no higher. Poured into a UK pint glass (20ozs vs. the US 16oz pint), patrons might have had upwards of 8 pints during a session and still remain coherent, ergo the "session beer." Sounds like a lot of beer, but it actually works out to be about 1 beer per hour if you take into consideration the rising ABV of today's beers.

Any beer that contains no higher than 5 percent ABV, featuring a balance between malt and hop characters (ingredients) and, typically, a clean finish—a combination of which creates a beer with high drinkability. The purpose of a session beer is to allow a beer drinker to have multiple beers, within a reasonable time period or session, without overwhelming the senses or reaching inappropriate levels of intoxication. (Yes, you can drink and enjoy beer without getting drunk.)

Un-Session continued on next page...

Session continued on next page...

When and Where
Friday, Jan. 11, 7:30 pm
Adventures in Homebrewing
6071 Jackson Road
Ann Arbor MI
313 277 2739

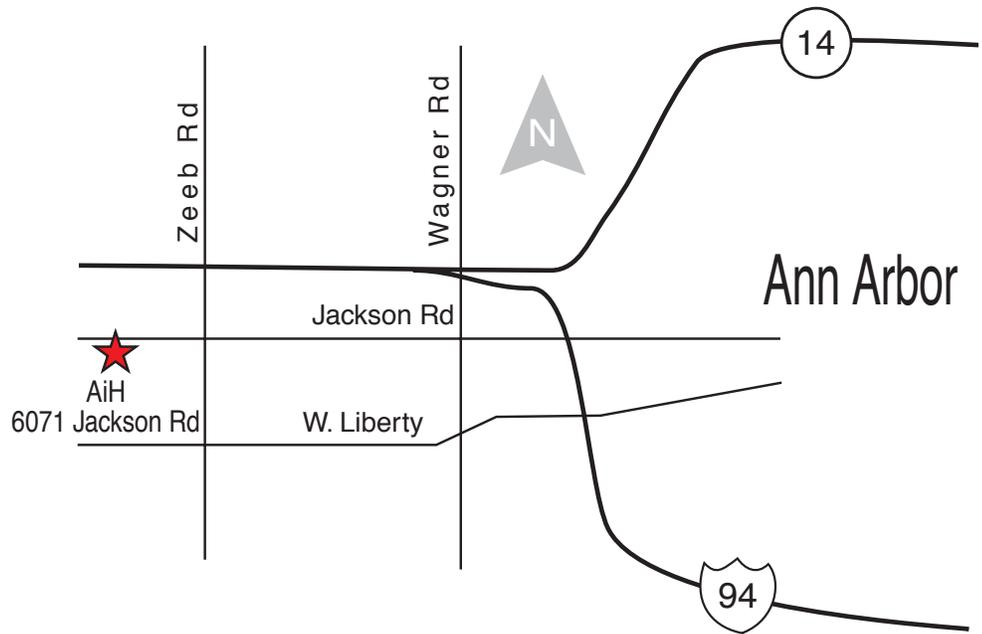
Extra Info About AiH

There are no chairs, if you want to sit down, bring a chair. Homebrew supplies can be bought from AiH, but you must make your purchase before 7:00 p.m.

AABG Policy

AABG encourages responsible, legal consumption of homebrewed and craft beverages.

You must be at least 21 years old to attend AABG meetings.



Guide for New Members

Bring a tasting glass and 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.

... *Un-Session* continued

After South Carolina passed the law allowing high gravity beer to be sold, only three other states carry on with the prohibition; Alabama, Mississippi, and W. Virginia. Since the law went into effect there has been a flurry of interest in these beers. In the Charleston area alone there have been several high gravity beer tastings, judgments, and even beer dinners in various restaurants and shops that sell alcoholic beverages. Many of these vendors are trying to find which high gravity beers have the highest demand and which of them they should offer in their stores and restaurants. It's got the potential for a booming business in the lowcountry.

In essence, high gravity beer is created by brewers who want to brew unique, quality beer that is tasty and fun to sip and experience. It's a creative artistry that is part of the growing food and beverage revolution in this country and also a growing industry.

— *Yahoo Voices*



... *Session* continued

Why does a session beer have to be under 5 percent ABV? The average ABV of the 30,000-odd beers in our database is 5.9 percent, but as you approach the 6 percent mark, we've found that beer drinkers feel the impact of this extra 1 percent quite easily over the course of a drinking session. While body chemistry varies greatly from person to person, 5 percent ABV seems to be optimal for everyone. Remember: the point of a session beer is imbibing socially without getting loaded.

But don't be fooled; just because a beer is lower in ABV doesn't mean that it's lower in flavor. All over the world, there are thousands - tens of thousands - of beers being made at 5 percent ABV or lower, in every conceivable style.

— *Beeradvocate, 12.10.05*

Making High Gravity Beers

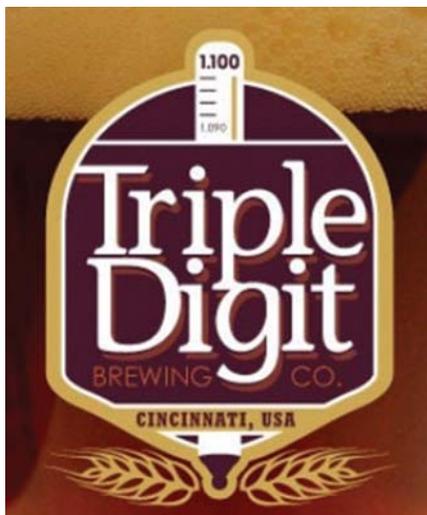
Now is a great time to consider making a high gravity beer to toast in the new millennium. I consider high gravity beers are beers as those have starting gravities in excess of 1.070. These would include ales such as Belgium Triple, English Barley Wines, Russian Imperial Stout, Scotch Strong Ale and Chico Big Foot as well as two lagers from German, Doppelbocks and Eisbocks.

There are a three things to know about brewing high gravity beers that will be extremely helpful.

First, due to the very high gravity ratings, you should be on guard for a very active fermentation for the first 2–4 days. I have had numerous brewers tell me that their high gravity beer blew the lid off their fermenter. This was probably due to the fact most home

brewers that ferment in plastic fermenters, no matter the size, do not strain the batch as they pour it into the fermenters. The fine hops fragments and other solids are not large enough to stop up the opening in the airlock that is attached to the fermenter, BUT they tend to ride the carbon dioxide bubbles that form during fermentation to the top of the foam. Making

their way to the opening of the airlock, where they are joined by other fine particles. As they accumulate at the opening, they can clump together and create a blockage and build up enough pressure to blow off the lid or blow out the stopper. I tell you not to discourage you from brewing a high gravity beer but to understand the need to strain the beer even you are using a fermenter large enough that blow-off should not occur. An easy way to



strain beer, is by using an elastic straining bag that will stretch across the rim of the plastic pail. By the way, I would not ferment one of these beers in a 5-gallon carboy due to the amount of beer that you are likely to lose during the blow-off stage of fermentation.

Next, high gravity beers need a high IBU (International Brewing Units) rating so that the beer will be balanced when it matures. With IBU ratings in this range, the common perception would be that the beer would be exceptionally bitter. Not. Even though the recipes will have rating in the 70+ range, they will ultimately be very malty due to the large amount of DME (Dried Malt Extract) used to develop the high alcohol content.

Last, with gravities reaching as high as 1.110, they will require an extended time for conditioning. A reduction in the amount of sugar added at bottling should be anticipated. An amount of 1/4 to 1/2 cup is all that is needed. By itself, this amount of priming sugar would not develop enough carbonation for most of us. However, the more complex sugars which are present in a high terminal gravity, 1.025 and higher, will kick in to give beer the extra fermentables need-

ed for proper carbonation. These sugars kick in at about the 6–9 month range. Therefore, it is very desirable to make this beer up to a year ahead of time.

These beer will keep waiting for months but they will worth the wait. Furthermore, they will have a shelf life of 10 years or more. Consider one of these beers to toast in the millennium and hold on, 10% alcohol can sneak up on you real quick.

— *Alternative Beverage*

WLP099

Super High Gravity Yeast

Flavors from this yeast vary greatly with the beer produced. The higher the gravity, the more winey the result. Beers over 16% ABV begin to taste less like beer, and more like fortified wines. With low gravity beers, this yeast produces a nice, subtle English ale-like ester profile. As the gravity increases, some phenolic character is evident, followed by the winey-ness of beers over 16% ABV. Most fermentations will stop between 12–16% ABV unless these high gravity tips are performed:



- Aerate very heavily, 4 times as much as with a normal gravity beer. Less oxygen dissolves into solution at high gravity.
- Pitch 3–4 times as much yeast as normal.
- Consider aerating intermittently during the first 5 days of fermentation. This will help yeast cells during a very difficult fermentation. Aerate with oxygen for 30 seconds or air for 5–10 minutes.
- Higher nutrient levels can allow yeast to tolerate higher alcohol levels. Use 2 times the normal nutrient level. This is especially important when using WLP099 to make wine and mead, which have almost no nutrient level to begin with.
- Do not start with the entire wort sugar at once. Begin fermentation with a wort that would produce a 6–8% beer, and add wort (it can be concentrated) each day during the first 5 days. This can be done together with aeration. This is mandatory if the reported 25% ABV is to be achieved.

— *White Labs*