

# w·i·z·a·r·d·s

*Worcester Incorporated Zymurgists Advancing Real Draughts*



**Homebrew Club  
Worcester, MA**

Sponsored By



## [The WIZARDS at the 2009 Holiday Party!](#)



## [January Club Meeting, Theme: New Brewers Night, 14 Members Present](#)

The 39New Year started with our annual open house/new brewer's night! It must be working club membership has been on the rise all year!

James led the club in its first ever discussion on Gruit. See our March meeting for a quick summary! Today we sampled three Gruits from James: **Heather Ale**, **Yarrow Ale** and a **Dark Ale** with the 3 traditional herbs.

## [February Club Meeting.](#)

The February meeting started with our annual "Intro to Judging" seminar where we walked everyone through the BJCP score sheet in preparation for next month's Judging Practicum.

And the meeting ended with our barleywine tasting.

**March Club Meeting, Theme: Judging Practicum, Quarterly Style Tasting - Gruit, 12 Members Present**

**Judging Practicum** – This month we held a training session for judging our upcoming home brew competition. The club was divided into 4 groups of 3. Each group then evaluated beer samples in accordance with BJCP judging guidelines and score sheets. When each group has completed all 4 beers, general discussion commenced, with each group presenting its evaluation of its initial beer, peppered with commentary from other groups who tasted that beer. Hilarity ensues; and even a teachable moment when it is discovered (through the commentary) that the first bottle of Czechvar opened was skunked, but the second (opened by other groups) was not – lesson: do not be afraid to ask for second bottle if an off flavor is suspected. The sample beers were:

- 1) Ommegang Hennepin (Belgian Saison): Beer with something in addition to hops (Coriander, orange peel)
- 2) Stone IPA (American Pale Ale): A hop-forward beer
- 3) Ayinger Celebrator (Dopplebock): A malt-forward beer
- 4) Ceske Budejovice Czechvar (AKA: “Budweis33er Budvar”) (Czech, or Bohemian Pilsner): A “green bottle” beer; a Lager

**Gruit** - James expanded on the Gruit presentation from January:

- a) Definition: Any herbed beer without hops
- b) Examples of the herbs passed around to allow members to examine aroma, etc.
- c) History:
  - i) Herbs were in use before hops were introduced to brewing
  - ii) Gruit was typically brewed in the Middle Ages
- d) Although any herbs can be used, there are three herbs considered traditional in a Gruit (samples passed around):
  - i) Marsh Rosemary
  - ii) Sweet Gale
  - iii) Yarrow
- e) Gruits sampled (all homebrewed by J. Adams):
  - i) Gale Ale – brewed using only Sweet Gale for bittering/flavor/aroma
  - ii) Stout – Heavy on the wormwood; very bitter
  - iii) Small Belgian Gruit – small beer (very small, indeed: OG: 1.029) from second runnings of recent Barleywine-style ale; using the three traditional Gruit herbs (Yarrow, Marsh Rosemary and Sweet Gale, plus ginger and lemon peel)
  - iv) Heather Ale – Heather in addition to Gruit herbs
  - v) Barleywine Gruit – A little out on the edges of brewing; used cranberry pomegranate juice, giving a very tart flavor (not related to the Sm. Belgian Gruit above)

## WIZARDS 2010 Year in Review

vi) A “Porter-like” Ale – brewed with the three traditional Gruit herbs

**Home brews sampled this month:** Bryant’s **Scotch Ninja** (15% ABV!!) Barleywine, Don’s **Barleywine**, Brian’s **Dunkelweizen** and Rob’s **Belgian Brown**.

### [April Club Meeting, Theme: Competition Judging, 19 Members Present](#)

The April meeting brought us judging for the Annual Wizards Home Brew Competition. Members present were allowed to choose their flight, with some readjustment based on size of group and number of entries in a flight. Each flight had at least one experienced judge to lead the flight and mentor the more junior judges. Fifty-four entries in eight flights were judged by the club with eight beers advancing to the Best of Show Round to be judged on National Homebrew Day.



### [National Homebrew Day and Wizards Home Brew Competition Awards Ceremony](#)

Strange Brew hosted the club in the back parking lot for a day of brewing and merriment. Jimmy LeClair’s Dark American Lager was crowned Best of Show in this year’s competition. Watch the video on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae3lx2hIFjk> or just search YouTube for “AHA Big Brew 2010 WIZARDS.”

The WIZARDS extend a special thanks to all who participated in our competition and National Homebrew Day, especially all of you who reluctantly volunteer to judge and collect the prizes!

### [May Club Meeting, Theme: Gruit Tasting, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Style, 20 Members \(and 2 guests\) Present](#)

This month we had a special guest, Jon Gottsche from SPARGE (Springfield Pioneers of Ales with Regal Grand Esters) a homebrewing club in the Springfield area (Pioneer Valley) of Western Mass. In his words, Jon is currently

“visiting his fellow Baystater's enjoying our common passion (homebrewing) and see how other clubs, societies, and associations of fellow home brewers hold their sessions, conduct their business, enjoy their efforts and promote our humble age-old craft.” What a meeting we had to show him!

The night started with a taste of the Caribbean for sampling Bill brought back from a recent trip: (ranked highest to lowest by the club): Banks (Barbados), Kubuli (Dominica), Carib (St. Kitts) and Piton (St. Lucia).

Bryant gave the club a talk on brewing Saisons. Saison is considered a descendent of Gruit. It is typically brewed in the Walloon region (Belgium), and environs in late winter, to be enjoyed in Spring/Summer. The style is known for being dry and refreshing; with low hop flavor, but high bitterness, and a moderate alcohol content of around 5-7% ABV. The Club tasted samples of Ommegang Hennepin; Saison DuPont, and Lost Abbey Red Barn. Saison DuPont seemed to be the best-received of these.

James led the tasting of Gruits (see March notes). The Club tasted a round dozen home-brewed or commercial Gruits, with herbs ranging from heather to ginger and lemon. One was a medieval White Ale, brewed using only spices and salt, no hops or herbs!

### *June Club Meeting, Theme: Officer Elections, 20 Members Present*

Dave was re-elected president and Bill was re-elected secretary/treasurer for another term. A new vice-president position was created this year to focus on event planning and Keith was elected to this position. Thanks to all of our officers for all they do to make our club a success.

The rest of the Club meeting was a maelstrom of beer tasting, sampling, general and specific discussions, and even more beer tasting. A partial list of beverages sampled includes:

- Clown Shoes Brewing – all three of their current beers: Brown Angel, Hoppy Feet, and Clementine
- Kelpie - brewed with seaweed!
- “Gruit” – a gruit from Germany
- Dave D.’s Ballantine Ale clone (from BYO article/recipe)
- Rob C’s Spruce beer, made using all molasses for the fermentables
- Keith A’s Aussie Pale Ale, and Scottish 90/-
- Nick H.’s “Solstice Cider”
- Kurt L.’s Wheat beer with all home-grown hops
- Rob C.’ other spruce beer
- And many others.

**July Club Meeting, Theme: Summer Swill-Off, Fourth Quarter Style Talk-Porter, 18 Members Present**

Nick led the club through the annual summer swill-off. This year featured all Asian beers. He brought us seven different samples to try and guess which was which. At least a few of us got four of them right (which hardly sounds like much of an accomplishment). The beers of the summer swill-off were: Asahi (Japan), Kingfisher (India), Kirin Ichiban (Japan), Lion (Sri Lanka), Sapporo (Japan), Singha (Thailand) and Tsingtao (China). A good time was had by all.

Nick also talked to us about the next quarterly style – porter. Commercial examples tasted included Sam Smith's Taddy Porter; Fuller's London Porter; Yuengling Porter; and Meantime Coffee Porter.

Other samples tasted during the pre- and post-meeting chaos included:

- Rob C's beers (2, of the same batch); one with an herb whose name I can't recall (borge?); one without.
- Mike R's attempt at reproducing Bill N's "Hillside Pale Ale": Needed more carbonation.
- Greg G's dark Mild.
- And many others.

**August Club Meeting, Theme: "Keg-Only Club Competition" Judging, 3rd Qtr. Style Tasting - Saison, 18 Members Present**

This summer brought the club's first ever **Keg-Only Club Competition** where the wining beers would be served in the beer tent at the New England Homebrew Jamboree in early September. An establish "Panel of Experts" from among those who did not enter any beers in the KOCC did the judging and unanimously voted Dave Howland's Filmishmish Apricot Blonde Ale the winner!

For more information on the Jamboree, you can read about last's year's on the website at <http://home.comcast.net/~wnevits/wizards/nehj2009.pdf> or see the jamboree's web site at <http://www.homebrewersjamboree.com/index.html>.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Style Tasting: Saison (Bryant G.)** - Bryant started with a recap of the style: flavor, ingredients, "good summer beer", can use either Belgian- or French-style yeasts, etc. The style had been nearly dead, but is making a comeback.

Then we got down to business: sampling Saison!

- James A's **Gruit Saison (French-style yeast)**: Extract-only, using only Yarrow for flavoring. Clean, smooth and refreshing.
- James A's **Gruit Saison (Belgian-style yeast)**: Extract-only, using only Yarrow for flavoring. Rather tart. Not as well-received among WIZARDS as the French-style one.

- Mike M's **Saison**: Pilsner malt, Belgian Yeast. Sweet and malty.
- (indecipherable name; I must've been "in my cups" again) **Saison**: White Labs yeast blend, Saaz & Goldings hops. Slightly sweet, peppery.
- Vik R's **Saison**: Pilsner malt, Willamette hops, coriander and bitter orange peel flavorings. Belgian Golden Ale yeast. Good, but not as refreshingly light as the previous ones.
- Dave H's **Saison**: Trying to emulate Lost Abbey's Saison. Grains of Paradise, black pepper, ginger, oats, and White Labs Belgian yeast. Very nice; spicy yet light and refreshing.
- Brian F's **Saison**: Pilsner malt, (indecipherable ingredient that is either cardamom or coriander), Czech Saaz and Soriachi Ace hops. Very nice.

**Home brews sampled this month:** Bill's **Scottish 80/-**, Brian's **Double IPA**, Bryant's **American Pale Ale**, Keith's **'Pro-Am' Porter** (brewed with pro brewer and Club member Ben R., for entry into the GABF's Pro-Am competition), Brian F's **Berliner Weisse**, Matt G's **Double Rye IPA**, Bill's **Brown Ale** and Deja Brew's **Summerfest**.

[New England Homebrew Jamboree, Branch Brook Campground, Campton, NH](#)

The WIZARDS joined with FOAM for our first time in the beer tent.

Served by the Wizards:  
 Apricot Blonde Ale  
 Hillside White

Served by FOAM:  
 Maple Porter  
 American Porter  
 Wit-brett



**September Club Meeting, Theme: Oktoberfest Tasting, 20 Members Present**

The club met in September to host our annual Oktoberfest! Tastings came from Naragansett, Paulaner, Leinenkugel, Victory, Saranac, Wachusett, Stoudt's, Hooker, Harpoon, Berkshire Brewing, Brauerei Heller-Trum / Schlenkerla, Element and Avery.



**Home brews sampled this month: Don's Oktoberfest, Bill's Dark Mild and Brian's Pumpkin Ale**, along with commercial beers **Jopen Koyt**, a gruit from Holland and the Gardner Ale House's **Altbier**.

**Fall Brew Day, in the Strange Brew Parking Lot**

Once again the club met in the Strange Brew parking lot for a day of brewing and merriment! A good time was had by all and we made a few good brews to boot.



**October Club Meeting, Theme: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Style Tasting - Porter, 22 Members Present**

The October meeting brought Porter Night to the club. In addition to welcoming 4 (Four!!) new members, there was an extended presentation of post-event reports, including the Fall Brew Day and Kurt L's fabulous tour of Maine

Breweries and Cheese Makers, and an equally lengthy discussion of upcoming events. After this, we settled in for a really wild ride: Porter tasting! Among the porters sampled were:

- Mike R's P3: Similar to Koskinen's porter [below], with the same specialty malts, but in different proportions.
- Mike R's Koskinen's Porter (see above)
- Nick H's Porter: Has coffee liqueur added!
- Dave H's Porter: Pecans??? Intriguing...
- James A's Gruit Porter: Herbal/slightly woody
- Bill N's Porter: No special ingredients added. A little bitter, but nice.
- Mike H's Porter: Smooth! (made back in May)
- Brian F's Raspberry Porter: Strong Raspberry aroma. Used Organic Fruit puree in secondary fermenter.
- Dave D's "Self-Serve" Pickup Porter: Very good
- Ric F's Baltic Porter: Malty and very smooth! Hides the high ABV well.

**Other home brews sampled this month included:** Matt G's **Rauch Beer**, Tim W's **Apple-Pear-Wheat Ale**, and **All-Citra IPA**, and Mike H's **Mead**, along with a commercial beer from Maine Beer Co.: **Peeper Ale**.

### [Harvestfest at Strange Brew, in the Strange Brew Parking Lot](#)

Cider and grapes arrived today for those wanting a change of pace. Plus we had a few club members brewing in the parking lot for all to see.

### [November Club Meeting, Theme: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Style Discussion, 15 Members Present](#)

Due to a scheduling conflict at Deja Brew, the club met for the first time upstairs at Strange Brew. Thanks for Brian for offering to host us at the last minute.

Bryant gave a talk on brewing Scottish and Scotch Ales. Commercial examples presented for sampling included Innis and Gunn, Wet Willy, Traquair House Ale, Traquair Jacobite Ale, Geary's Wee Heavy, Now it's up to everyone to brew one for the February meeting!

President Dave announced the Volunteer Prize Draw – all new for 2011. The draw is being instituted as a way to both encourage and reward volunteerism in the club. Any time a club member organizes or leads a club activity (such as a quarterly style, a pub crawl, a brew day or whatever), they will be awarded one entry in the volunteer draw. At next year's holiday party one entry will be selected to receive a valuable prize. There is no limit on number of entries person so enter as many times as you can.

**Home brews sampled this month:** Bill's **Light Mild and #10 beer**, Greg's **Dry Slack Tub Stout**, Dave's **Pickup Porter**, Don's **Robust Porter**, Rib's **Soft Serve Belgian (?)**, Pat's **Irish Red** and Paul's **Sierra Nevada ESB clone**.

**Ciders sampled this month:** We started with Matt's sweetened cider and then it was ciderfest from Brian: Mint cider, Forbidden Cider, The Cider of Life, Pumpkin, Licorice, Apple Lambic and an Orange Blossom Mead.

[Holiday Party 2010](#)



Commercial Brews	Homebrews, Ciders & Meads
Middle Ages X Double India Pale Ale	American Porter
Liefmans Goudenband	Blonde Ale
Stone Vertical Epic	Number 10
Cold Spring 3 Lick Spiker Ale	Dark Mild
Heavy Seas Winter Storm	Dopplebock 2000 (two kinds)
Weihenstephaner Festbier	Belgian-Chai
Wachusett Nut Brown Ale	Pumpkin Ale
Magic Hat Encore	Belgian Pale Ale
Warhorse Peace Bomber Lager	Sparkling Mead
Bear Republic Red Rocket Ale	Orange Blossom Mead
Trappistes Rochefort	Hard Cider Back Sweetened with Cider
Julio's Ry(e)an Ale	Cinnamon Spiced Cyser
Trader Joes 2010 Vintage Ale	Belgian Blonde Ale
Wychwood Hobgoblin Ale	Old Ale
Harpoon Oak Aged Dunkel	
Wachusett Black Shack Porter	
Cascade Brewing Sang Rouge	
Guinness Extra Stout	
Sierra Nevada Bigfoot 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2010	



**December Club Meeting, ~15 Members Present**

Due to a scheduling conflict at Deja Brew, the club went on a mini-pub crawl to the Dive Bar and then to the Wormtown Brewery. A good time was had by all who attended.

**The End**