

The origin of chocolate: Beer!

[First submitted by Mark Kaidy, and reprinted with permission of news scientist.com]

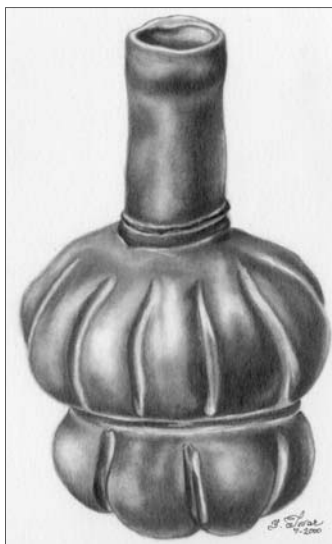
Chocolate was first produced by the ancients as a by-product of beer, suggests a new archaeological study. And evidence from drinking vessels left by the Mesoamericans who developed chocolate suggests that the source of chocolate, cacao, was first used 500 years earlier than thought.

Mesoamericans – who flourished in central America before it was colonised by the Spanish – developed chocolate as a by-product of fermenting cacao fruit to make a beer-like drink called chicha still brewed by South American tribal people.

The Mesoamericans before Columbus's time, developed a taste for the chocolate, but their cousins down in South America stuck with the beer, says Cornell University archaeologist John Henderson, who led the new study.

Unsweetened chocolate drinks became a central element of Mesoamerican cultures including the Aztecs, from whom Europeans learned of chocolate in the 16th century.

Archaeologists have found pottery made to serve the frothed chocolate drink preferred by the pre-Columbians in earlier sites, and have found traces of chocolate in pots dating back to 600 BC. But the origins of the drink had been unclear.



Earlier long-necked pots would have been used for beer making. Chemical evidence in a pot such as this is seen as proof that beer brewing involved fermenting cacao

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Maryland, Taxes, & Beer

By Steve Kranz

If the recent special session of the Maryland General Assembly is any barometer, Maryland consumers of beer, wine and liquor are in for a rough ride. Considering who's driving the bus in Annapolis these days, the sky is pretty much the limit as far as what they will tax, and how much.

Governor Martin O'Malley (G-MOM) got the 20% increase in the sales tax he wanted, to make Maryland "**competitive**" (his word, not mine) with surrounding states. While the sales tax does not (yet) apply to food items in Maryland, it does apply to beer, wine and liquor retail sales. So, starting in January (unless the lawsuit filed right here in Carroll County by the minority party gains any traction...), we'll all be paying more for our favorite beverages. And that's on top of the price increases we will soon see stemming from the worldwide hops and malt shortages.

In addition, the General Assembly's regular session starts soon, and Del. Bill Bronrott (D-Montgomery) is apparently set to reintroduce his failed bill from last year which would **double** the state's excise taxes on alcohol. Hold on tight...he complains that Maryland's current excise taxes on alcohol are among the lowest in the nation. Never content for Maryland to be among the **lowest** when it comes to taxing its citizens (i.e. being "**non-competitive**"), he and other proponents of higher alcohol taxes will undoubtedly point out that doubling the current excise tax on beer from its current rate of \$.09 per gallon to \$.18 amounts to only a few cents per pint.

Of course, he'd be right on the math...as far as it goes. But add to that the 20% increase in the sales tax which also applies to retail beer sales and virtually everything else we buy, and it starts to take a more noticeable bite out of Joe Public's disposable income.

Moreover, since the next General Assembly session isn't even here yet, there is still plenty of time for

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Club Hoppennings

Carroll County honey is available

For you meadmakers and brewers who like to use honey, this is the season. Carroll County beekeeper Gary Wilmsen has honey available for sale, including (at least as of this writing) buckwheat, light and amber wildflower honey. Contact Gary directly at Wilmsen@wmconnect.com

Goodbye to club friend Mark Glannon

Members who were involved with the Clay Pipe project will remember Mark Glannon, a beekeeper from whom we obtained the honey used in our batch of Midnight Special Pale Ale. I recently learned the sad news from beekeeper Gary Wilmsen that Mark had passed away earlier this year. Just as Mark and his wife were beginning construction on a new home in Virginia, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and died several months later.

BrewCamp 2007 has largest turnout ever!

Cunningham Falls State Park was again the site for our club's annual BrewCamp this past October. A total of 21 club members and friends came to brew, dine, and camp.

Over the weekend, we brewed a total of 89 gallons of beer. But Eric Lyons astutely points out that since we drank at least 90 gallons, the world actually experienced a net reduction of beer.

This year's BrewCamp meals were outstanding, as usual. On Friday evening, Karen and Paul Seegers hosted a magnificent feast of Chili with Mac & Cheese. It wouldn't have been BrewCamp without some rain, and *boy* did it rain on Friday evening. Fortunately, Paul had set up his way huge tarp canopy, under which we dined. Saturday's supper was a Shrimp Etoufee served up at Steve Kranz's



What happens at BrewCamp stays at BrewCamp...until it appears in the newsletter.

site. Debbie Lyons and Steve peeled 8 lbs. of shrimp for the huge pot of Etoufee, and not a morsel was left.

Next year, we plan to rent a separate site which will serve as a communal dining and brewing venue for the whole weekend. That way, there will be plenty of room to set up a large and

completely covered dining pavilion for the whole weekend without having to disturb or rearrange anyone's individual camp sites. It will also be the site where the water faucet is located, for ease of use for brewing purposes. Many members would benefit from this extra site, so we will seek the officers' approval of this expenditure from the club's treasury next year.

2008 National Homebrew Competition

is just around the corner...First Round entries will be due in April. That sounds like a long way off, but if you don't already have something you might consider entering, NOW is the time to brew. And if you have already brewed a beer that you think (or that someone else has told you) is all that, why not send it in for some professional feedback? You will need four 12-oz. bottles in all, one for the first round, and three more if it advances to the final round. Rules and more details will be forthcoming soon.

2008 National Homebrewers Conference

will be in Cincinnati, Ohio, June 20-22. That's only an 8-hour drive from here, close enough to let anyone make the trip if you're not all about flying...or trying to ship beers like we did last year.

The main hotel is already sold out, so five of our members have already reserved rooms or suites at the second conference hotel, which is right next door to the main hotel.

Bottom line: if there is even a remote possibility

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Brewer's Tips

- **Distilled water for extract brewing**

I came across this excellent tip in Brew Your Own magazine (Oct. '07), and it makes perfect sense.

When malt extracts are made, the producer makes up a wort, then evaporates the water to leave behind malt extract in either syrup or dry powder form. But water evaporation also leaves behind whatever else is in the producer's local water supply, including its mineral content.

There's nothing wrong with that. But if you then reconstitute that wort by adding "regular" water (tap water or bottled spring water) to the extract, your beer will have essentially double the mineral content, i.e. the minerals that are already in the extract, plus the minerals in your own water.

That's probably not an issue in most cases, but especially if you are trying to brew a lighter-bodied or lighter-flavored beer, using distilled water will give your beer a better chance to be excellent because you are reconstituting the wort to its original mineral content, since distilled water is just water...no minerals.

- **Store your hops FROZEN**

We are entering what we all hope will be a brief hop shortage, though everything I read predicts it will last several years. What that means for some of us is that we will buy our favorite hop varieties, if we can still find them,

in bulk and store them away for use when they might be in short supply.

I'm guessing that few of us regularly store hops in the freezer. But for long-term storage, it is essential to keep them as cold as possible for as long as possible.

It's also a good idea to label your hops with the date of purchase, so you can use the oldest ones first and rotate your stock to keep it as fresh as possible. Sometimes I'll mark the package with a Sharpie. But when I'm lazy (which is usual) or in a hurry, I just keep the hops in the store bag along with the dated receipt, and shove the whole bag in the freezer.

- **Hops - Uses and substitutions**

In line with recent news about upcoming shortages in some hop varieties, we should be prepared to make informed substitutions if a particular variety we want is unavailable.

Many brewing books have charts which describe the characteristics of different hop varieties, their most appropriate uses, and possible substitute varieties. A good example is in John Palmer's How To Brew.

Good online resources include:

<http://www.hopunion.com/hopunion-variety-databook.pdf>

<http://www.byo.com/referenceguide/hops/>

<http://www.wellhopped.co.uk/index.htm>



I recently have taken to buying Dale's Pale Ale, for two reasons: it's *really* a good beer, and it comes in cans so I can dispense it from the soda machine in my basement. Well, I'm sitting here pondering this great beer I'm drinking, and I notice these logos and emblems on the back of the can...and damned if they're not ads! Looks like Oscar Blues Grill & Brew (brewer of Dale's); the Ball Corp. (canning equip.), Maverick American (bicycles), and that queer little round logo with the eagle in the center, that says in German "Ricebier ist nicht gut!" (Ricebeer is not good!)

Brewpub Review: Brewhaus Lemke (Berlin, Germany)

By Eric & Kristsa Custer

No matter where you are in the world, beer is an international language. While traveling abroad, sight-seeing in Berlin, Germany, we were very pleased to find an establishment that caught our attention. Neither of us speak a lick of German, but were easily able to translate “Brewhaus” as we walked by. After touring Charlottenburg Palace, we felt it was time for a beer break and a snack, so we strolled over to Brewhaus Lemke.

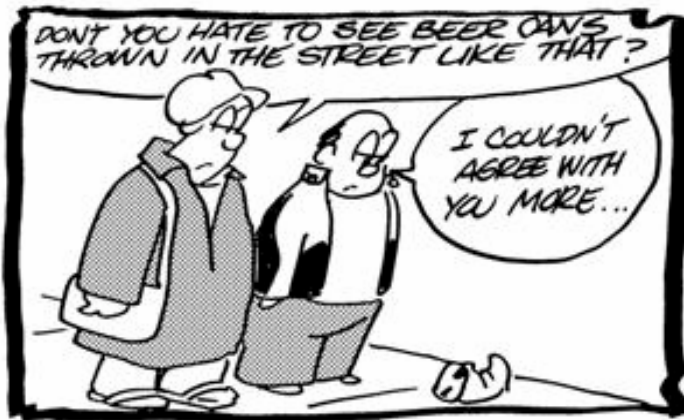
Of course we started our ‘snack’ by both ordering a beer sampler, consisting of 4 rotating brews: seasonal, original, pils, and wheat. Each of these brews were tasty, our favorite being their original, which was a dunkel. Their seasonal beer was a Zwicker. While finishing our samplers, we ordered an early

afternoon snack of a pretzel and Flammkuchen (a very delicious flat bread pizza) and took turns wandering around checking out the brass kettles and beer lines running throughout. After another pint of our favorite beers of the sampler, it was sadly time to move on for the day.

Unfortunately we were unable to ask the waitress or bartender anything about the history of the brewpub as no one spoke enough English to carry on a conversation. We did see on the menu that it was established in 1999 and did not seem to be a chain. Early afternoon on a rainy day found only a few beer lovers inside, but I’m sure evening hours attracted more of a crowd.



We rate Brewhaus Lemke with 4 hops. They offer great brews made on premises, delicious food and plentiful seating, both inside and out.



Three mates were working on a high-rise building - Mick, Bruce and Bluey. Mick falls off and is killed instantly. As the ambulance takes the body away, Bruce says, “Someone should go and tell his wife.” Bluey says, “OK, I’m pretty good at that sensitive stuff, I’ll do it.”

Two hours later, he comes back carrying a case of Foster’s. Bruce says, “Where did you get that, Bluey?” “Mick’s wife gave it to me,” Bluey replies. “That’s unbelievable! You told the lady her husband was dead and she gave you the beer?”

“Well not exactly,” Bluey says. “When she answered the door, I said, ‘You must be Mick’s widow’. She said, ‘No, I’m not a widow.’ And I said, ‘I’ll bet you a case of Foster’s you are’.”

A conservative Muslim was seated next to an Australian on a flight from London to Melbourne, Australia. After the plane was airborne, drink orders were taken.

The Aussie asked for a rum and coke, which was brought and placed before him. The flight attendant then asked the Muslim if he would like a drink. He replied in disgust, “I would rather be savagely raped by a dozen whores than let liquor touch my lips.”

The Aussie then handed his drink back to the attendant and said, “Me too. I didn’t know we had a choice.”

Beer & Brewing News

For a clever and entertaining beer and homebrewing web site, visit:

<http://www.weaselsbreweries.com/index.html>

By Steve Kranz

(The more things change, the more they stay the same. Read on...)

90% of Sudanese women inmates are arrested for winemaking

KHARTOUM, Nov 30 — Remember Gillian Gibbons, the British school teacher working in Sudan who was sentenced to fifteen days in prison for allowing her class of 7 year-olds to name a teddy bear Muhammad? Although she was let go after about a week, the event shed some light on this under-belly of the world. The place where she was intended to serve her sentence is the Omdurman women's prison in Khartoum.

So what's this got to do with brewing? Well, that prison is grossly overpopulated by winemaking women from southern Sudan who make up 90% of the prison's population. Winemaking is a traditional activity in the south, but it is illegal in northern Sudan where strict Islamic law rules. Women who flee their war-torn homes in the south migrate north where they are arrested for making and selling wine.

The women know winemaking is illegal, but they do it anyway because it is profitable, and it's the only way they have to feed their families...

<< *fast-forward to the year 2015* >>

SASCAR holds first race

KHARTOUM, Nov 30, 2015 —

In a striking parallel to the origins of NASCAR racing in America, a group of winemaking Sudanese women have formed the Sudan Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (SASCAR), and staged their first stock car race.

The winemakers have become skilled at outrunning authorities, with cars that are faster and more complete than the police vehicles that chase them. [Law enforcement agencies suffer from rampant theft of spare parts, which end up mostly in the winemakers' cars.]

SASCAR arose out of a dispute between two winemaking clans over who had the faster cars. A race to settle the dispute was agreed to as an alternative to bloodshed. Organizers from both factions met to set ground rules for the race, and SASCAR was born.

The field of six unnamed drivers lasted on the make-shift track for five minutes, before they fled in a cloud of dust to elude authorities who had arrived to arrest them. Witnesses, about thirty people who all claimed anonymity for fear of reprisals from local Imams, said the red car was the clear winner.

But a man who claimed to be a SASCAR judge, declared the other red car, the one with the doors, to be the winner. He said the first red car had an unfair advantage as it had no doors at all, disqualifying it.

"We will have no credibility in the racing world if we have no standards," he said. The judge went on to say that the police raid was ordered by an unpopular petty bureaucrat whom he had forgotten to bribe, and promised that "he will not be a problem the next time."

Boon Geuze Review

Contributed by Neil Mezebish, who adds:

"Interesting Belgian beer, though why anyone would try one after reading the description is well beyond me..."

Boon Oude Gueuze Mariage Parfait 8° pours a hazy orange gold color. Large sized white foamy head, with good long lasting lacing. Aroma is leather and must, sweet and sour with barnyard and horse blanket. A medium to full bodied geuze. Tart and funky flavors blended with barnyard and must. Some old books, apples, lemons and peaches. Despite all the funk, and this one is really funky, make no doubt about it, there is a nice malt backbone. Lively carbonation. A funky, tart and sour geuze, it is not as dry as the 'regular' geuze. Lots of stuff going on in this one. Mouthfeel is full and round. Finish is crisp and dry. Aftertaste is tart and funky.



Flying Dog moving brewing operations to Frederick

After acquiring Frederick Brewing Co. in May 2006, Denver-based Flying Dog Brewery is moving its brewing operations to Maryland. The move will mean eight new jobs, though six of those could be filled by current employees from Denver who will be offered relocation to Frederick (shhh...don't tell them about G-MOM's tax increases).

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Chemical clues

Chocolate's unique flavour develops only when the watery pulp of raw cacao fruit and seeds are fermented together, colouring the seeds purple. Grinding the seeds yields the chocolate.

"It struck us that it wasn't obvious how to do this," says study co-author [Rosemary Joyce](#) at the University of California at Berkeley. The involvement of fermentation led her and Henderson to speculate that cacao beer might have been the originating process

Only now has hard evidence come to light in the form of pot shards dating from 200 BC to before 1100 BC that they found in the ruins of an ancient village called Puerto Escondido in the Ulúa Valley in Honduras.

Harnessing a technique developed by Patrick McGovern at the University of Pennsylvania, they were able to extract chocolate residues from the pores in the pottery. Tests found theobromine – a chemical signature of cacao – in 11 of 13 fragments, including one that Joyce estimates dates from 1100 to 1200 BC.

Club Election Results

This year's elections (for the next two-year terms) were again conducted online using the free www.surveymonkey.com web site. Here's how it went:

President: Neil Mezebish was unanimously re-nominated. As there were no other nominations, Neil was automatically re-elected. Congratulations!

Treasurer: After Larry Hitchcock passed away earlier this year, Nancy Codner volunteered to take over the role of Treasurer. During this election's nomination process, both Nancy Codner and Cassie Akeley received nominations, which set up a run-off election.

The final results are in, and Nancy Codner has been elected to a full 2-year term. Thanks to both Cassie and Nancy for agreeing to serve.

	Response Percent
Cassie Akeley	18.8%
Nancy Codner	81.3%

'Smoking gun'

That pushed evidence for cacao drinking back 500 years. That pot, and others older than about 900 BC, also lacked any traces of the chilli pepper Mesoamericans used to spice up their chocolate. Pots designed for making a frothed chocolate first appeared after this date, the researchers report.

The oldest fragment was the long neck of a bottle that could

have held beer, but could not have been used to make the frothed chocolate beverage that became popular later. Joyce called that "the smoking gun" showing that beer had come first.

She suggests that the key step in switching to chocolate came when ancient brewers ground up the cacao seeds remaining after fermentation and added them to thicken the beer – giving it a chocolate taste.

Announcement

With many thanks to Debbie Lyons, and appreciation for her service to the club as our Event Coordinator, we are pleased to announce that the role of Event Coordinators is being passed on to Eric & Krista Custer. Thanks for volunteering your service!

Recipes: The Great Pumpkin Ale, and the Great Pumpkin Pie

Eric and Krista Custer contributed these recipes, which are a perfect matched set for the winter brewing season. Brewers, start your burners...and your ovens!

The Great Pumpkin Ale

- * 3 lbs Amber Malt Extract
- * 3 lbs Light Dry Malt Extract
- * 1 lb Crystal Malt
- * ½ lb Chocolate Malt
- * 1 tsp Gypsum
- * 2 oz Ken Goldings Hops (Bittering)
- * 1 oz Fuggles Hops (aroma)
- * 1 tsp Irish Moss
- * 8 lbs FRESH pumpkin (NOT canned)
- * 1 pkg pumpkin pie spice
- * 3 whole nutmegs
- * 6 whole Allspice
- * 1 pkg London Ale Yeast
- * ¾ c corn sugar (priming)

Quarter the pumpkin and sprinkle with pumpkin pie spice. Bake for 2 hours at 350 degrees, until it is tender. Remove from the oven. Cut the pumpkin into 1-inch cubes, mash slightly and set aside.

Place crushed crystal malt, chocolate malt, and gypsum in water and steep at 155 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove spent grains and add the malt extract, Kent Goldings hops, pumpkin, cinnamon sticks, nutmeg, and allspice. Boil for 1 hour, adding the Fuggles hops and Irish moss during the last 5 minutes. Remove the whole spices and pumpkin. Cool wort and pitch yeast. Ferment 10 to 14 days.

Transfer to secondary fermenter and ferment for an additional 5 to 7 days. Bottle, using corn sugar. Age in bottle for 7 to 10 days.

OG: 1.049

Save the spent pumpkin and use it for recipes such as the pumpkin pie recipe! Simply drain the spent pumpkin to remove all the excess moisture. Once drained, you can use this in place of canned pumpkin for your favorite recipes! We were able to make 4 pumpkin pies and 1 loaf of pumpkin bread from our spent pumpkin. I do recommend using more sugar than called for in the below recipe.

The Great Pumpkin Pie

Crust:

- * 1 ½ c All-Purpose flour
- * ½ tsp salt
- * ½ c shortening
- * 4 to 5 tbsp water

Filling:

- * Pumpkin from the Great Pumpkin Ale
- * 1 ½ c evaporated milk
- * ½ c sugar
- * ¼ c light or dark brown sugar
- * ½ tsp salt
- * 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- * 2 eggs

Stir flour and salt together in a large mixing bowl. Cut in shortening until pieces are pea sized. Sprinkle 1 tbsp water over the mixture and toss with a fork. Repeat until it is all moistened. Form into a ball and set aside. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Remove the skin from the pumpkin and put it in a strainer. Firmly press down on the pumpkin removing as much water as possible. Place in food processor or blender and puree. Combine 2 cups of pureed pumpkin and the evaporated milk, sugar, brown sugar, salt, spices, and eggs in a large mixing bowl and mix well.

Roll out the dough and press into a 9-inch pie plate. Pour in the filling. Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees for 45 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool before serving.

Happy Holidays, and a safe and happy New Year!

The Midnight Homebrewers League wishes all members and readers a safe and happy holiday season. We encourage readers to use good judgment when enjoying adult beverages if you must drive home from festivities. Get a ride when in doubt, use a designated driver, or sleep it off. We want to see you again...alive.

Events Calendar

For all tastings, \$5 per member (\$7 for guests) covers the host's costs. RSVP directly to the host, or as otherwise indicated. If you wish to schedule an event, contact Event Coordinators Eric & Krista Custer, or any club officer.

January

26 Chili Cook-Off hosted by Lydia & Gary Cress. RSVP 410-876-6605 or cdplusinmd@comcast.net

February

9 Mardi-Gras tasting hosted by Michelle & Steve Kranz. RSVP 410-848-6695 or stevekranz@comcast.net

March

tba Polar Bear Brew at the Seegers' in Pylesville.

April

May

3 Big Brew to celebrate National Homebrew Day

June

18-21 National Homebrew Conf. in Cincinnati

January 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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27	28	29	30	31		

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those who rule over us to decide that doubling the alcohol taxes is insufficient...maybe tripling or quadrupling them would be the next great way to redistribute more of your money to where it is needed most: the gaping maw of state government.

But for the tens of thousands of Marylanders who enjoy drinking beer, we homebrewers can teach them the very simple, effective and legal way for Maryland consumers to avoid paying ANY taxes at all on their adult beverage of choice: **brew it yourself!**

Even in Maryland, adults are permitted to brew up to 200 gallons (per household with 2 adults, or 100 gallons per adult) of beer at home for personal consumption, without any regulation, licensing, or taxation. And because the ingredients that go into beer (primarily barley malt, hops and yeast) are also food items, they are not subject to Maryland's sales tax.

Tax-free beer, in Maryland, no less. Having a beer and sticking it to the tax man at the same time is truly one of life's simple pleasures.

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you might attend, we urge you to call the Hamilton Hotel to make a reservation now. Find information at:

<http://www.beertown.org/events/hbc/hotel.html>

2007 Holiday Parties

Wow...thanks to Teresa and Charlie Heaps for hosting a great club party on Dec. 8. The spread of food was amazing and delicious...all I wanted was to be alone in another room with that cheese thing for awhile. I think I heard Charlie say he would write up a piece about his project converting a compact 'fridge into a beautiful 2-faucet kegerator. And Mrs. Byrd handily whupped all challengers at table tennis.

The Guild party at Clipper City was held the week before ours, and we had another nice turnout of members. Steve's Farmhouse Ale came in 3rd Place among about 24 entries in the beer competition, and a number of our members left with excellent door prizes.

February 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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March 2008

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