

West Kingdom Brewers' Guild Newsletter

Volume I Issue IV

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FRANK KHAELER

Private
No peeking

Greetings and welcome



to yet another edition of the Kingdom of the West Brewer's Guild Newsletter. Amazing as it seems, this one is even relatively *on-schedule* ! (I know - it scares me, too.)

Inside, you'll find all sorts of amazingly useful material, including an article on Krausening by Eoin, another installment from Gerard's Woefully Incomplete Lexicon, the usual Morgan's Corner and, yes, even yet another semi-useful, semi-accurate gem from Iamov. A bargain at twice the price !

Special thanks go to Eoin for a mostly unsolicited article and Gerard for his article and for buying the beer for this editing session. While I'm on the subject, I'll take anything from anyone for inclusion in the newsletter (as evidenced by the inclusion of Iamov's ramblings). I need art, articles, recipes, experiences - both good and bad, old laundry lists, *anything!* Whatever it is, send it to me at the address on the last page. You can even kill two birds with one stone - I'll pass anything I get on to Morgan for inclusion in the Kingdom of the West Brewer's Guild Recipe Book.

The Pub Calls,

ERIK
ULFSSON

Morgan's Corner

Greetings !

Well, we've headed into the winter season, but the guild shouldn't hibernate. Lots of things are already brewing (no pun intended) for the coming year. I just wish I knew where to start.

Okay, let's start with old business. I NEED RECIPES, ARTICLES and ARTWORK for the "West Kingdom Brewer's Guild Recipe Book". I've procrastinated on this myself, but with the winter months I will have more time to work on this. I would like input from *everyone*, no matter how inexperienced you may be (this means you, too, Eirik!) (*Hey! - ed*)

As you may know, the Kingdom Arts and Sciences have asked the Guild to bring something for display at Twelfth Night. Juana Isabella (formerly Grun) and Berengaria have suggested a few ideas - flyers and sign-up sheets, bottles of brew with recipes, and/or tasting sessions. I like the idea of flyers - we could use copies of the newsletter. I also would like to do the tasting session (sounds like a Guild meeting to me!) Anyone interested in participating in the tasting, please contact me *soon*. My phone and address are listed in this issue.

Also at Twelfth Night, I would like to collect a few bottles of brew from everyone interested in helping the Land Fund. This brew will be donated as a mixed case (beer, wine, mead, etc.) for the Land Fund auction as a "Taste of the West".

There is talk of a Collegium to be held in the spring and I've been asked about holding a brewing class. Anyone interested in teaching? More on this as details develop.

The questionnaires you sent in have been very informative. I've just started looking at them, but they seem to be full of good ideas. General consensus is that the Guild should meet at Crown events, either Saturday evening or early Sunday. So, for now, I guess we'll keep the meetings on Saturday evening. I'll discuss these questionnaires more at a later date, once I've had a chance to sort through them.

One item more - the idea of a Guild stamp was discussed at October Crown. This would probably be a wax seal that could be added onto *Guild Approved Brews*. Sounds almost like an award of excellence.

Well, I've rambled too long already, Good Day.



Krausening

Coin Choirr Dhragoín

Krausening (pronounced KROY-sen-ing) is a way of priming your beer or ale without the use of corn sugar. Instead of adding sugar at bottling time, you add a little of the wort reserved from your next batch. It has three benefits:

First, it seems to make a drier, smoother beer, without affecting the alcohol content or the balance of the flavor of your favorite recipe.

Second, it gives you a little more beer - about a quart more per five-gallon batch.

Third, it allows you to make beer that meets the Medieval German Reinheitsgebot - the purity law that dictates that nothing be used in beer except water, hops, and barley malt (the yeast is assumed). Of course, if you use malt extract, you'd better check with your supplier that the extract itself contains no corn sugars (a few of the commercial extracts do).

There is nothing uncommon about krausening. Anheuser-Busch (*yuck! - ed*) has been doing it for years, and many microbreweries use this technique when they aren't using the more period method of priming: waiting until the fermentation cycle is almost, but not quite, completed, and then bottling or kegging the beer to retain the pressure. This method, however, requires that you know precisely at which point the fermentation process is almost, but not quite, completed. In other words, when the specific gravity is about 0.003 higher than its value will be when fermentation is complete. I never know at what point that is, since I brew with amounts of sugar and ingredients which vary widely from batch to batch. But I can get nearly the same effect by krausening.

Here's the way I do it: I always brew my next batch of beer immediately before bottling the previous one ("immediately" means the same night or the night before). I use about 5% more of every ingredient which the recipe calls for, and after everything is in the carboy I use as a primary fermenter, I fill it to the top with water, giving me about 21 quarts of wort.

I then siphon off a quart and a half of the wort into a juice bottle (previously sanitized with a chlorine solution and rinsed) plus another two ounces (enough to fill my hydrometer flask). It is important to do this right away, before the contents have had a chance to settle, thereby throwing off your specific gravity reading. I refill the carboy up to the five gallon mark. This takes about another pint, which decreases the specific gravity of the wort by half a point...not enough to worry about. (*I hope you all realize the gravity of this situation - ed*)

Note that all of this is done before any yeast is added. Now I put the carboy aside to cool down to 80 degrees (I don't have a wort chiller) and record the specific gravity of my sample. If I'm not bottling the same night, I seal the juice bottle with a sanitized lid and put it into the refrigerator. It should keep for a day or so.

Now comes the hard part: calculating how much of the gyle (that's the stuff in the juice bottle) to add to the batch you're about to bottle. That amount depends on what the specific gravity of the gyle is. That value is not a constant, but depends on the strength of your recipe. But never fear. There is a formula in Charlie Papazian's *Complete Joy of Home Brewing* (*great book - ed*) that I've been using for the past few months, and it works pretty well. Here it is:

$$\text{Quarts of Gyle} = \frac{(12 \times \text{Gallons of Wort})}{(\text{Specific Gravity} - 1) \times 1000}$$

This isn't nearly as complicated as it sounds. If you've brewed 21 quarts of beer, like I do, you've brewed 5.25 gallons of wort, so the value of the top line is always going to be 63. Got that?

All the bottom line means is that you take your specific gravity and use the last digits in it. If, for instance, your specific gravity reading (at 60 degrees) is 1.035, then the value for the bottom line is 35. If your reading is 1.062, the bottom line value is 62. It's that easy.

So the number of quarts of gyle you'll use is 63 divided by the only digits of the specific gravity you're interested in.

The last batch of beer I brewed had a specific gravity of 1.052. So the amount of gyle I need is 63 divided by 52, or about - let me see, now - 1.21 quarts, which is one quart plus about seven ounces, which I will measure out in a measuring cup which I have previously sanitized.

I put the gyle into the bucket into which I'm decanting the wort from the secondary fermenter, just as I would have added the sugar solution. The bottling proceeds normally, except that I'll need six more bottles (more or less, depending on the amount of gyle used).

If you take a specific gravity reading before and after adding the gyle, you'll find krausening adds about 0.002 - 0.003 to the reading.

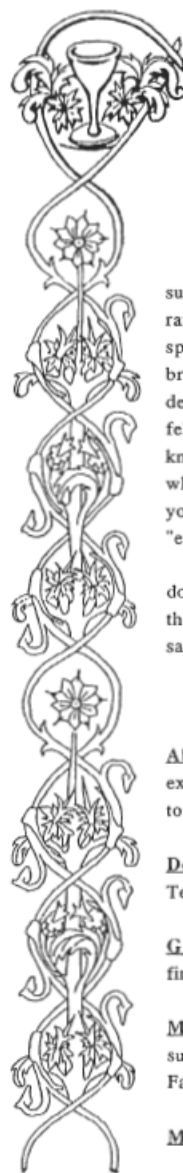
That's krausening in a nutshell. If there comes a time when you know you'll be bottling one batch a day or so after you brew another, give it a try. Unlike other refinements to your brewing technique, it requires no extra equipment (except a juice bottle or the equivalent). I think you'll find that it is worth the extra hassle, both in taste and in the satisfaction received from brewing a beer or ale that conforms to medieval standards.

One last thing: I mentioned the German Reinheitsgebot earlier, but want to add that the use of hops seems to have been limited only to Germanic countries. In Medieval England, its use was frowned upon, but I have no idea of what (if anything) was

used in its place. If anyone has any documentation on what actually was used in period, I'll be glad to brew a batch and share it with you. Drop me a postcard (John LaTorre, P.O. Box 6651, Salinas, CA 93912-6651), or catch me at Twelfth Night Coronation.



-- Eoin Thoirr Dhragoin



A Woefully Incomplete Lexicon Of Brewing Terms and Phrases

As Perceived by Gerard the Esoteric

Well, here I am again, passing unto you the knowledge I have gained on the subject of brewing. Luckily, Eirik, Morgan, several books, brew supply stores and random strangers have been willing to lend their input to this article so that it may span more than one paragraph. The simple fact of the matter is, I am a simple brewer who learns as he goes along - mainly from his mistakes. Hopefully, these definitions and trite brewing phrases will help the beginner understand what his fellow, more experienced, brewers are talking about. To be honest, I myself don't know half of the time, so I ask. Don't be afraid to ask anybody (preferably someone who brews) about a term or subject that you don't fully understand. If the brewer you are addressing is worth half his wort, he will be more than willing to share his "expertise" with you.

Never be discouraged. Ask around, read a book, brew something. If it doesn't turn out, don't fret - just ask a fellow brewer about your recipe, and work out the snags. For a "bribe" or two, most brewers will brave the harshest elements to sample and comment on your brew.

Enough of this introduction! Onto the Lexicon...

Abattoir: A slaughterhouse. This word has absolutely nothing to do with brewing, except for once when a potential brew taster said that he preferred the smell of one to my ale.

Dextrins: Unfermentable and tasteless carbohydrates that contribute body to beer. Technically, four or more glucose molecules linked together.

Gyle: That portion of unfermented beer wort that is reserved for or added to finished beer for conditioning (carbonation).

Mash: The process of converting grain starches to fermentable sugars by carefully sustaining water and grain "soup" at temperatures ranging from 140 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit for a period of time.

Must: The juice of grapes before or during fermentation.

Rack: The process of transferring unfinished homebrew from a primary fermenter to a secondary fermenter. A siphon is always used so yeast sediments remain undisturbed in the primary.

Wort: Lovingly prepared liquid which will ferment to homebrew, consisting of (depending on the brew) boiled malt, hops, barley, and water.

Yuck: That which is exclaimed by Royalty when sampling a particularly bad vintage. Don't be discouraged by this word. We've all heard it, and will hear it again.

That's about all this issue. Next issue, along with more terms and phrases (never fear), I will be givin a list of home brew supply locations. If anyone has any recommendations, or unknown words, let me know. I can be contacted at the same address as Lord Eirik.

Sources: *The Complete Joy of Home Brewing, Avon Books;*
Webster's Dictionary of the English Language

Gerard



The Dregs

I thought that since last month I just launched into a discourse on Period Beer without a proper introduction as to my origins and particular qualifications, I would rectify that situation in this issue. I actually expected Eirik to make the proper introductions, so I wouldn't have to waste space in *my* column (not to mention eloquence) doing *his* job. Anyway, I think that it would be prudent at this juncture to further elucidate.

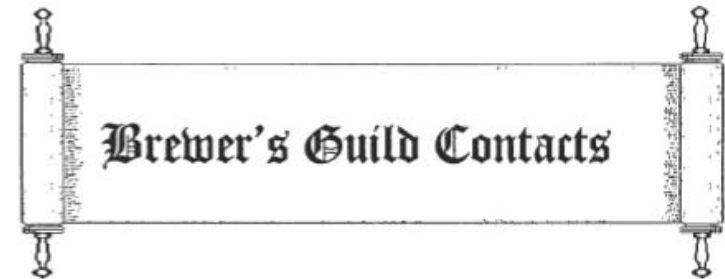
But before I start, I would like to get one thing perfectly clear. I had the full understanding that Eirik was a competent editor, and that the introduction would be extrapolated from the diverse and comprehensive history sheet submitted by myself to him. He had made clear to me that any articles appearing for more than two or three submissions would require such a history, and I was more than willing to comply. (*I don't remember this! -ed*)

So here, without further ado, is the complete, unexpurgated (and, I might add, extremely interesting) life and times of Iamov du Bious H'Origins:

Well, we're out of room for this issue, but make sure and read the next exciting installment Iamov's The Dregs. -ed



by Iamov du Bious H'Origins



Newsletters Related Stuff:

Eirik Alfsson

Private
No peeking

Everything Else Guild Related:

Morgan Conner

Private
No peeking

Principality of the Mists Brewers

Sir John Theophilus

Private
No peeking