

# OHIO VALLEY HOMEBREWERS ASSOCIATION

# TAP

www.ovha.net

June 2009

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## 2009

### Upcoming Events

#### JUNE

**Wed, June 24, 7 pm:**

Meeting; Germania Mannerchor, Topic: Solid State Peltier Temp Controller by Dutch DeHaan; Beer Style: Saison/Farm Ales

**June 25:** Indiana State Fair Brewer's Cup Entry Deadline

#### JULY

**July 11:** Indiana State Fair Brewer's Cup Judging and Awards Ceremony @ Indy

**Sat, July 25** Westside Sportsman Club Bar-B-Que Comp and Brewing Demo

**Wed, July 29, 7 pm:**

Meeting; Germania Mannerchor, Topic: ??? by Jack Frey; Beer Style: Pilsner/Lager

#### AUGUST

**Sat, Aug 1:** AHA's National Mead Day

**Sat, Aug 15:** SWIRCA's Craftbrewer's Festival, @ SWIRCA

**Wed, Aug 26, 7 pm:** Meeting; Germania Mannerchor, Topic: ??? by Dwayne DeLaney; Beer Style: Fruit Beers

## Sensational Saison



### Introduction

When crafting a beer, the first thing many brewers do is consult the BJCP Guidelines<sup>1</sup> to get the param-

eters of what they are going to brew. In the case of many (if not most) styles, these parameters are reasonably narrow and straight-forward. However, if a Belgian style ale is what you're in the mood to brew, well, things might just not be so simple – which can be good and/or bad.

The following is an overview of a Belgian Saison style ale that Randy Weber and I recently brewed that placed first in its category (16 C – *Belgian and French Ale : Saison*<sup>1</sup>) and won 2<sup>nd</sup> Best of Show at the 2008 Music City Brew Off contest in Nashville, TN. I'll discuss some topics that I felt were keys to making this a successful beer and present the recipe for you to try yourself.

### A Brief History of Saison

Saison originated in the Wallonia region of Southern Belgium, particularly in the province of Hainaut.<sup>2</sup> They were originally brewed by farmhouses in the late fall or early winter to nourish the field workers the following summer. The fact that each particular farm brewed its version of the beer establishes the fact that Saison is really more of a “family of special beers”<sup>2</sup> than a particular unified style. In general, however, the beers were intended to be refreshing, and tend(ed) to fall into the pale color range and would be “light in alcohol and flavor<sup>2</sup>.”

Because Saisons were brewed by individual families for consumption on their own farms by both the workers and the farmer's family, it is interesting to draw a parallel to modern-day home brewers as we brew for our friends and families. It could just be that Saison is a style of the Wallonia Home (or Farm) Brewers.

Today, in Belgium, Saison is “brewed year-round in tiny, artisanal breweries whose buildings reflect their origins as farmhouses.”<sup>1</sup>

### BJCP Guidelines

Despite the inherent difficulty, the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) has come up with some guidelines to brewing and judging Saison for the sake of competitions. Rather than recite these word-for-word, I will give you what I think are the key parts of the guidelines (<http://www.bjcp.org/2008styles/style16.php#1c>).

- **Aroma** – High fruitiness, Low to moderate hop aroma, Fruity esters, floral. Sourness is acceptable in sour versions of Saison but is not necessary.
- **Appearance** – Color is pale orange (more often than not) but can range to amber. Some haze is allowed due to the rustic history.
- **Flavors** – Well attenuated yet fruity and spicy. Sourness is fine in moderation. Hop bitterness is moderate. Spices can be used and should contribute the spicy, earthy character while not becoming overwhelming. Hot or solventy alcohol flavor is not desired.
- **Mouth feel** – Light to medium body with high carbonation.
- **Original Gravity** – 1.048 to 1.065 (5 to 7% ABV)
- **IBU** – 20 to 35 IBU.

### General Goals

The recipe that is presented here was created with several particular goals. The first was that the beer was to be well-attenuated. The style is refreshing and, in my mind, should leave the drinker wanting another sip. Poorly attenuated beers that are too sweet cause palette fatigue and sweetness does not lend itself to drinkability. The beer was designed to be a pale orange in color. I really feel there is a particular color that just says ‘Saison’ to me. Expressed in SRM, this color is about 6.5 SRM. Yeast is to be the overall character-giving element to the beer without the need for adding spices or fruits. Finally, the bitterness should be noticeable without being overpowering.

### Fermentables

Our goal with the fermentables is, firstly, good attenuation and, secondly, a light to moderate body with a just a little breadiness. The yeast is really what gives a Saison its distinct characteristics, so the malt should play the supporting role in this beer.



## Style of the month: Saison/Farm Ales

From the 2008 Beer Judge Certification Program for Category 16C Saison

**Aroma:** High fruitiness with low to moderate hop aroma and moderate to no herb, spice and alcohol aroma. Fruity esters dominate the aroma and are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges or lemons. A low to medium-high spicy or floral hop aroma is usually present. A moderate spice aroma (from actual spice additions and/or yeast-derived phenols) complements the other aromatics. When phenolics are present they tend to be peppery rather than clove-like. A low to moderate sourness or acidity may be present, but should not overwhelm other characteristics. Spice, hop and sour aromatics typically increase with the strength of the beer. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity, and should not be hot or solventy. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Often a distinctive pale orange but may be golden or amber in color. There is no correlation between strength and color. Long-lasting, dense, rocky white to ivory head resulting in characteristic "Belgian lace" on the glass as it fades. Clarity is poor to good though haze is not unexpected in this type of unfiltered farmhouse beer. Effervescent.

**Flavor:** Combination of fruity and spicy flavors supported by a soft malt character, a low to moderate alcohol presence and tart sourness. Extremely high attenuation gives a characteristic dry finish. The fruitiness is frequently citrusy (orange- or lemon-like). The addition of one of more spices serve to add complexity, but shouldn't dominate in the balance. Low peppery yeast-derived phenols may be present instead of or in addition to spice additions; phenols tend to be lower than in many other Belgian beers, and complement the bitterness. Hop flavor is low to moderate, and is generally spicy or earthy in character. Hop bitterness may be moderate to high, but should not overwhelm fruity esters, spices, and malt. Malt character is light but provides a sufficient background for the other flavors. A low to moderate tart sourness may be present, but should not overwhelm other flavors. Spices, hop bitterness and flavor, and sourness commonly increase with the strength of the beer while sweetness decreases. No hot alcohol or solventy character. High carbonation, moderately sulfate water, and high attenuation give a very dry finish with a long, bitter, sometimes spicy aftertaste. The perceived bitterness is often higher than the IBU level would suggest. No diacetyl.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Alcohol level can be medium to medium-high, though the warming character is low to medium. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Very high carbonation with an effervescent quality. There is enough prickly acidity on the tongue to balance the very dry finish. A low to moderate tart character may be present but should be refreshing and not to the point of puckering.

**Overall Impression:** A refreshing, medium to strong fruity/spicy ale with a distinctive yellow-orange color, highly carbonated, well hopped, and dry with a quenching acidity.

**History:** A seasonal summer style produced in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium. Originally brewed at the end of the cool season to last through the warmer months before refrigeration was common. It had to be sturdy enough to last for months but not too strong to be quenching and refreshing in the summer. It is now brewed year-round in tiny, artisanal breweries whose buildings reflect their origins as farmhouses.

**Comments:** Varying strength examples exist (table beers of about 5% strength, typical export beers of about 6.5%, and stronger versions of 8%+). Strong versions (6.5%-9.5%) and darker versions (copper to dark brown/black) should be entered as Belgian Specialty Ales (16E). Sweetness decreases and spice, hop and sour character increases with strength. Herb and spice additions often reflect the indigenous varieties available at the brewery. High carbonation and extreme attenuation (85-95%) helps bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. All of these beers share somewhat higher levels of acidity than other Belgian styles while the optional sour flavor is often a variable house character of a particular brewery.

**Ingredients:** Pilsner malt dominates the grist though a portion of Vienna and/or Munich malt contributes color and complexity. Sometimes contains other grains such as wheat and spelt. Adjuncts such as sugar and honey can also serve to add complexity and thin the body. Hop bitterness and flavor may be more noticeable than in many other Belgian styles. A saison is sometimes dry-hopped. Noble hops, Styrian or East Kent Goldings are commonly used. A wide variety of herbs and spices are often used to add complexity and uniqueness in the stronger versions, but should always meld well with the yeast and hop character. Varying degrees of acidity and/or sourness can be created by the use of gypsum, acidulated malt, a sour mash or Lactobacillus. Hard water, common to most of Wallonia, can accentuate the bitterness and dry finish.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.065  
IBUs: 20 – 35 FG: 1.002 – 1.012  
SRM: 5 – 14 ABV: 5 – 7%

**Commercial Examples:**  
Saison Dupont Vieille Provision;  
Fantôme Saison D'Erezée -  
Printemps; Saison de Pipaix;  
Saison Regal; Saison Voisin;  
Lefebvre Saison 1900; Elle-  
zelloise Saison 2000; Saison  
Silly; Southampton Saison;  
New Belgium Saison; Pizza  
Port SPF 45; Lost Abbey  
Red Barn Ale; Ommegang  
Hennepin



Official OVHA T-shirts and polo shirts are still available. All shirts are only \$20 each. Get one (or a spare) before we run out.

### Recently Spotted In The Fermenter

**Chris Alvey:** IPA is Back (with a vengeance)

**Dwayne DeLaney:** Emerald Red, Watermelon (panty dropper) Wheat

**John Dippel:** Dunkel Weizenbock, Pale Ale

**Michael Erwin:** Irish Red Ale

**Don Heisler:** Newburgh Wheat

**John Mills:** Flander's Red

**Jimmy Pore:** Dark Cherry Dark Strong, Brett Blond

**Steve Sluder:** Red Pale Ale, Sum're Pale, Huh?

**Jeff Smith:** Bass Clone

**Josh Thompson:** American Wheat



## Sensational Saison Continued

- **Pilsner Malt** is used as a base due to its light color, good fermentability and lack of the little hint of sweetness that Two Row Pale malt might bring if that were used instead.
- **Wheat Malt** is a traditional ingredient for Saisons and is used as about 9% of the grain bill to add both mouth feel and a subtle bready component without adding much color. The addition of this much wheat may leave your beer a little hazy but shouldn't be to the level of a Hefeweizen.
- **Munich** malt makes up 5% of the grains to add a different bready, slightly toast character than the wheat. Munich is 10 SRM and will add a bit of color.
- A small portion of **CaraMunich** malt tops off the grains to add not only color, but a tiny bit of toffee/caramel flavor. Adding too much CaraMunich (say, anything above 5%) would be a mistake as it would get in the way of the clean backbone we are looking for as well as add too much color.
- **Table Sugar** is added near the end of the boil make up about 11% of the fermentables. Replacing some barley malts with sugar is a good way to assure attenuation as the yeast will consume all of the sugar versus only portions of a barley based malt sugar. Because our goal with this sugar addition is purely to produce a little alcohol and add nothing else, plain old table sugar will do fine. If you were to add candi sugars/syrups or other types of refined sugars, you would be adding additional flavors that really aren't intended with the sugar component of this particular recipe. Table Sugar also adds no color whereas other sugars may darken the wort.

A single infusion mash is used with an eye, again, toward good attenuation. A mash at the lower end of the saccharification enzymes' ideal range is used to produce very fermentable wort. About 148 F for 60 minutes will produce very fermentable wort. A thin mash thickness will also promote full conversion of your starches. This is because "... thinner mashes favor carbohydrase action because of the restraining influence sugar concentrations have on Alpha and Beta amylase."<sup>3</sup>

### Hops

The bitterness level of Saisons, like many other aspects, is quite variable from brewery to brewery and has evolved over time. Before refrigeration, "Saisons, like all stored beers, were generally heavily hopped."<sup>2</sup> As times and technologies evolved, bitterness rated decreased in Saison beers. The BJCP currently categorizes Saison at 20 to 35 IBU which is mildly to moderately hoppy in relation to the gravity of the wort.

Hop varieties traditionally used in Saison were those grown in the Poperinge area of Belgium.<sup>2</sup> these include Kent Goldings, Styrian Goldings, Czech Saaz, and Hallertauer.<sup>2</sup>

The hop variety choices for this recipe were influenced by the current hop shortage, and some non-traditional substitutes for traditional European hops were used (with good success.)

- **Sterling** is an American-grown cultivar that is reminiscent of Czech Saaz. It is somewhat herbal and spicy, but also has a bit of a flowery component. This was added at 60 minutes to produce bitterness mainly, but the flavoring components do somewhat remain through the boil.
- **Liberty** is another American Grown variety that is similar to Hallertauer – mild or "noble" in aroma and slightly spicy. Liberty is also added at 60 minutes.
- **Hallertauer Hersbrucker** is added with 20 minutes left in the boil to provide a bit of flavor and aroma. The Hallertauer variety was chosen as a sort of 'finishing' hop as the ones that were on hand were only 2.6% AA and would have to be used in a quantity that would impart too much 'green' flavor if it were used for bittering purposes.

### Yeast

"Fruity", "Spicy", "Highly Attenuative", "Complex", "Silly", "Peppery", "Moderately-Phenolic", "Clove-like", "Earthy", "Moderate Ester": These are all phrases used to describe characteristics of a good Saison yeast. As you can see, there's a lot going on with these yeasts in terms of flavor contribution. Luckily, specialty yeast producers like White Labs and Wyeast have a lot of quality choices available to the amateur brewer. The recipe presented here used a seasonal strain from Wyeast (3711 French Saison) that was chosen mainly based on the fact that it had a high attenuation but also because of the balance of other flavor contributions (spice, fruit, ester) to the beer. If this strain is not available, I would base my choice heavily on the percent of attenuation the manufacturer lists. Below are some common non-seasonal Saison strains that could be used (in order of preference):

Manufacturer	Name	Strain ID	Attenuation	Ideal Temp	Notes
White Labs	Belgian Saison Blend	WLP575	70-80%	70-80F	Blend of White Labs Saison and Belgian Strains
White Labs	Belgian Saison I	WLP565	65-70%	68-75F	Classic Wallonia Saison strain
Wyeast Labs	Belgian Saison	3724	76-80%	70-95F	Classic farmhouse strain. Good fermenter but slow.

Continued page 4



## Sensational Saison Continued

### Fermentation

The temperature (and thus the fermentation rate) plays a major role in the final flavor profile of any beer. This is particularly true of many Belgian style beers that derive their primary characteristics from fermentation by-products like fusel alcohols, phenolic compounds, and ester compounds. Saison strains have been known to be a bit 'finicky' at times and even the manufacturers report that some of these strains have a tendency to stall out early before fermentation is complete.<sup>4</sup>

With these things in mind, I have found it best to ferment in a controlled and gently-rising fashion from the lower end of a yeast strain's manufacturer-recommended temperature range to just below the upper range over the course of about 5 days. The key is to keep the temperature changes as gradual as possible and always make a slight change to 'warmer' but never 'cooler.' Following this regimen will help encourage the yeast to finish and allow gradual increases of desirable fermentation by-products.

For example – the Wyeast 3711 French Saison yeast used in this recipe has a recommended fermentation temperature range from 65 to 77F. An ideal fermentation of this beer would look something like this:

- Day 0 – Pitch Temperature – 65F
- Day 1 – Reproduction, Minimal Activity- 68F
- Day 2 – Moderate to Heavy Activity – 71F
- Day 3 – Heavy Activity – 73F
- Day 4 – Moderate Activity – 75F
- Day 5 – Slowing -77F

After day 5, I would keep it around 77F until all activity has ceased. Then, gravity can be monitored until a terminal gravity somewhere below 1.010 (ideally) has been reached. This may take a while so do not be too anxious to call your fermentation complete. The yeasts tend to clean up when given time.<sup>4</sup> If your beer is not complete, continue to maintain a somewhat elevated fermentation temperature as a drop in degrees will also tend to allow the yeast to 'give up' near the end of fermentation.

### Serving

Now comes the good part. Your Saison is best served at a moderate to high-moderate level of carbonation. Many Saisons are bottled in a large bottle topped with a cork and cage. However any kind of bottle (or keg) will do. I would suggest some Belgian-style chalice type glasses with wide mouths to get all of the great aromas that this beer has to offer. Finally, because you took great pains and attenuated this one nicely, you'll want to make sure to have several in the cooler ready to go because this one goes quick.

### Recipe (5.5 gal)

- Original Gravity 1.060 Final Gravity 1.008
- 26 IBU
- 6.4 SRM

### Fermentables

- 8 lbs.- Pilsner Malt [2 SRM]
- 1lb - Wheat Malt [2.4 SRM]
- ½ lb. - Munich Malt [10 SRM]
- 6 oz - CaraMunich Malt [56 SRM]
- 1.25lbs – Table Sugar

### Hops

- ½ oz – Sterling [5.1 AA] – 60 Min.
- 1 oz – Liberty [4.1 AA] – 60 Min.
- 1oz – Hallertauer Hersbrucker – 20 Min.

### Yeast

- Preferred: Wyeast - French Saison (3711 – Seasonal)
- Substitute: White Labs - Belgian Style Saison Blend (WLP568)

### References

Beer Judge Certification Guidelines - <http://www.bjcp.org/2008styles/catdex.php>

Markowski, Phil - *Farmhouse Ales (Culture and Craftsmanship in the Belgian Tradition)* Brewers Publications (2004)

Fix, George – *Principles of Brewing Science (A Study of Serious Brewing Issues)* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – Brewers Publications (1999)

Wyeast Laboratories – Belgian Saison 3724 - [http://www.wyeast-lab.com/hb\\_yeaststrain\\_detail.cfm?ID=60](http://www.wyeast-lab.com/hb_yeaststrain_detail.cfm?ID=60)



## Indiana State Fair Brewers Cup Entries due by Thursday, June 24 Judging and Awards Saturday, July 11

<http://www.brewerscup.org>

This is the most popular beer competition of our club. This event is tied in with the Indiana State Fair, but all events happen before the state fair. Several of our members enter a few categories each year and a lucky few have taken home ribbons. We also have a nice contingent go up for the actual judging and awards event on July 11; this never disappoints. If you are interested in judging or stewarding (no experience necessary) make a note of it in the OVHA forms. Chris Norrick has a beer loving uncle that lives in Indy and he has offered his house for staying the night this year and he needs a headcount.

Seriously considering sending your beer to this comp. The quality of judges is very high and most provide excellent feed back. A big plus is there is potentially no shipping costs to enter this comp. A benefit of OVHA membership is your beer will get hand delivered to a cellaring location. Details to be announced at the May meeting.

### Excerpt from the Brewer's Cup website:

**New for 2009:** All entries must be made online ([www.brewerscup.org](http://www.brewerscup.org)) and paid by credit card. No exceptions!

### Summary of Important 2009 Changes

- All online entries close at midnight Thursday, June 25, 2009.
- Last beer delivery accepted by 6 pm Thursday, June 25, at Sahara Mart East in Bloomington, Indiana. See below for other delivery options.

### Homebrewer of the Year Award

As in last year's competition, the Homebrewer of the Year award will be presented to the homebrewer who wins the most points. Points are earned by winning Best of Show, first, second, or third place. Walk away from the competition with the title, a trophy, and a Blichmann BoilerMaker brew pot of the size of your choice!

### Brewers' Cup Competition Fees and Instructions

- Entry fee for Home Brewers is \$10 per entered beer (three 12-oz. bottles per entry).
- When shipping or delivering bottled entries to any cellaring location, exhibitor must include a copy of the completed online entry form and proof of payment (your credit card receipt).
- Bottle ID labels should be affixed to each bottle with a rubber band.
- No late or carry-in entries will be accepted on the day of competition.

### When and Where to Send Your Beer (if not sending with the club to Brew-B-Q)

Beer may be delivered in person or by parcel carrier to the following cellaring locations beginning Saturday, June 13, 2009.

#### Cellaring Drop-Off Point A

Crown Liquors Attn: ISF/BC 11640 Brooks School Road Fishers, Indiana 46031 (317) 595-5877 Monday through Thursday, 9 to 11 am Friday and Saturday, 9 am to midnight Deadline for deliveries to this location is midnight Wednesday, June 24.

#### Cellaring Drop-Off Point B

Lafayette Brewing Company 622 Main Street Lafayette, Indiana 47901 (765) 742-2591 Monday through Thursday, 11 am to midnight Friday and Saturday, 11 am to midnight Deadline for deliveries to this location is midnight Wednesday, June 24.

#### Main Cellaring Location

Sahara Mart East 2611 East Third Street Bloomington, Indiana 47401 (812) 339-6224 Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 9 pm Sunday, 10 am to 7 pm Deadline for deliveries to this location is 6 pm Thursday, June 25.



Dwayne and Jim perform their stewarding duties at Brewers Cup 2008.



Dwayne brings home some hardware at Brewers Cup 2008.



## OVHA on the Road at the 3rd Annual Indiana Homebrew Club Day

by Dwayne DeLaney



From left, Don, Nathan, Brad, and Dwayne.

OVHA members Brad, Nathan, Don and I made the trip to Indy to participate in this year's Indiana Homebrew Club Day, Brew-B-Q 2009. This is the third year for the Brew-B-Q, an event organized and sponsored by Indianapolis' Foam Blowers of Indiana homebrew club. Each year, representatives from homebrew clubs across Indiana come together at Great Fermentations homebrew store to celebrate our common passion/obsession, swap beers and to eat.

As soon as we arrived, we decided to check out Anita's store. Great Fermentations ([www.greatfermentations.com](http://www.greatfermentations.com)) is the best homebrew store that I have visited. She has a huge selection of ingredients and just about every brewing gadget available at reasonable prices. While we were there, John Blichmann came into the store with his arms full of his products to be given away as door prizes. Nice. Our shopping was cut short when one of the organizers came in and told us that they were waiting for us to sign in before they would start.

After signing in, we found a comfortable spot next to the FBI canopy to park our chairs. Ron Smith, the head organizer, welcomed everyone to the event and encouraged us to mingle with the other participants while sampling the beers and eating some great Bar-B-Q prepared by Frank Petrarca, a FBI member. FBI members also provided some great sides dishes to go with the Q. Ron reminded everyone that when it comes to sampling the beers, "It is a marathon, not a race, drink responsibly."

We all made our rounds, talking and drinking with the other homebrewers. Some of the clubs had set up canopies with tables to display their club information and to serve their beers. This

might be something that we could do next year. The IBADS club brought their Brewmobile complete with two taps mounted to the trunk lid. Brad and Nathan brought a keg of an excellent IPA that was very popular with the other brewers. Although there were some great beers served, it got my vote as the best beer there.

This year organizers added Beer Games to the list of activities. The first game was a sort of Russian Roulette played by passing out cans of Miller Lite to the players. One of the cans had been shaken. Each of the players was instructed to hold the can directly



Brad winning the torture test.



Nate and Brad giving it their all.

under their chin and to open the cans simultaneously. Brad was the lucky/unlucky winner. The next game was a test of brute strength. How long could you hold a beer pitcher full of water and a can of Miller Lite straight in front of you without bending your arm? Brad and Nathan each gave it their best, but it wasn't good enough. Maybe next year.

After the games came the door prizes. The list of prizes included: lots of beer donated by World Class Beverages, lots of hops and other ingredients donated by Great Fermentations, BrewMometers, ThruMometers, BeerGuns and Quickconnector fittings donated by Blichmann Engineering and several pairs of tickets to the Indiana Microbrewers Festival. I am proud to say that none of the OVHA members present went home empty-handed. We all won door prizes. Sweet.

Thanks again to the organizers. There was a lot of effort and time that went into making this a successful event. We have always received a warm welcome in Indy. I hope that next year we will be able to have more club members present.



*The crew hanging out.*



*Nice crowd.*