



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

April 2021

## Contents of This Issue

Beer with Flavor!

Secretary's Column

The GNBC Summer Camp Out!

Beer Podcast from GNBC Member

2021 GNBC Homebrew Equipment

Club Fundraiser Auction

## Next Meeting

April 20, 2021

Club meeting, Zoom, 7pm

## GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

PMB 1204

3705 ARCTIC BOULEVARD

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

## GNBC WEBSITE

[www.GreatNorthernBrewers.org](http://www.GreatNorthernBrewers.org)

## PRESIDENT

Mike Fisher

[president@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:president@greatnorthernbrewers.org)

## VICE PRESIDENT

Christophe Venot

[vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org)

## TREASURER

Thomas Huling

[treasurer@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:treasurer@greatnorthernbrewers.org)

## SECRETARY

Jordan Couture

[secretary@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:secretary@greatnorthernbrewers.org)

## MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Steve Johnson

[membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Phylcia Christian, 2020-2021

Chaven Davidson, 2020-2021

Deb Morgan, 2021-2022

John Trapp, 2021-2022

Robert Trosper, 2021-2022

Contact information via our website

## Beer with Flavor!

By *Christophe Venot*

Reinheitsgebot be damned! Some of my favorite homebrews and commercial beers include ingredients more commonly found in the produce or spice aisles

at New Sagaya than in a traditional brewery. There can be a lot more to beer than barley, hops, water, and yeast. I'd bet a tablespoon of turmeric and a pinch of peppercorns that most beer enthusiasts have enjoyed a flavorful dish and thought "this would make a great beer flavor!" If so, you might be like me and enjoy brewing beers outside of BJCP style guidelines that are inspired by the flavorful foods that you eat.

Molé spices including cacao; guajillo, ancho, and mulato peppers; and cascara coffee fruit ready for whirlpool in an imperial stout base.



Desserts, pastries, sauces, and charcuterie have inspired several of my homebrews that turned out to be quite good. Here's some creative expressions of my culinary passions that most people found tasty:

- **Lactobacillus-fermented Salted Lemon Honey Gose** inspired by Moroccan preserved lemons;
- **Cranberry & Orange Zest Gose** inspired by homemade Thanksgiving cranberry sauce;
- **"Ye Ol' Salami Fingers" Oatmeal Porter** made with oatmeal smoked over moose salami;
- **Bacon Smoked Maple Porter** inspired by a tasty weekend brunch;
- **Salmon-Smoked Altbier** with malt smoked over candied salmon fillets;
- **Molé Imperial Stout** with dried chilis, reaper pepper tincture, cacao, vanilla, and lactose;
- **Key Lime Pielinerweisse** kettle sour with key lime puree, lactose, and vanilla; and
- **Banana Bread Brown Ale** – 40 pounds of very ripe bananas, dark malt extract, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, and toasted cacao nibs.

It should be fairly apparent that these beers might cater to the more whimsical, impulsive, and creative brewers, but achieving a harmonious balance of bold flavors may prove more difficult than perfecting a Pilsener recipe! Producing

a food-inspired beer that is enjoyable and even quaffable requires careful planning and application of spices and flavorings at optimal stages of the brewing process. Here are some suggestions for flavoring your beers:

- **Boil additions:** Caramelized sugars and lactose dissolve well in a boil, but most spices will lose some aroma and “brightness.” A good smelling boil means that desirable aromas are escaping the brewing process.
- **Whirlpool additions:** Spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, anise, chilis, cacao nibs, and toasted nuts; herbs including thyme, sage, and spruce tips; and other botanicals will have flavor extracted without losing aroma and tasting “cooked.” Similar to hops, a whirlpool or hot stand between 160 and 180f for 10 to 20 minutes will extract the most aroma and sanitize any additions. Adding fruits or vegetables in this temperature range will sanitize fruit, but may dull flavors, result in aromas blown-off during fermentation, and cause pectin haze in the finished beer.
- **Fermenter additions:** Additions to the fermenter are generally used for additions of ingredients that are fermentable and temperature-sensitive. For instance, adding chopped or pureed fruit to the fermenter will allow yeast to ferment out the fruit sugars without resulting in a cooked flavor. Adding ingredients with potential contaminants (e.g., wild-picked blueberries) at the end of fermentation when alcohol is present and pH is 5 or less will reduce the risk of an infected beer and reduce the amount of aroma lost to vigorous fermentation. Many raw ingredients can be rinsed with Starsan solution before addition as an additional precaution against clandestine microbes; the phosphorus-based acid in Starsan is consumed by fermenting yeast and leaves no off-flavors. Additional fermenter additions might include fresh herbs, vegetables, and dried fruits.
- **Keg additions:** Post-fermentation additions in the keg can be used to allow for cold-extraction of aromas from spices, nuts, herbs, and even fermentables such as dried fruits. Flavors added to a keg become trapped in the liquid and are not blown-off like in a fermenter. Bagging added ingredients allows for pressure-transfer to another keg once the flavor extraction hits a desired point. Keeping kegs cold and serving from a tap might allow for addition of fruit purees, back-sweetening with interesting sugars such as dark maple syrup or demerara.
- **Tinctures:** Last but not least is perhaps the most versatile method for the precise addition of very strong spices. A tincture is a concentrated flavoring solution that can be added in measured quantities to your beer. Tinctures are commonly made by steeping spices in hot water or alcohol. Use of boiling water will often extract undesirable tannins from spices and may mute aromas, so water in the 180-190F range is best, similar to making tea or coffee. Use of hot water or alcohol has the added benefit of sanitizing ingredients that might otherwise infect a beer. Adding spices to an alcohol complimentary to your beer (brandy, whiskey, gin, etc.) can create an especially aromatic tincture, especially for alcohol-soluble flavors such as chili oils. When your tincture is sufficiently flavored, a coffee filter or even a clean paper towel can be used to filter spices out of a tincture to avoid them to your beer.



Mincemeat pie was inspiration for my latest ice cider. The cider was aged in the keg with brandy-soaked golden raisins, zante currants, cinnamon, nutmeg, gloves, ginger, and allspice. The intense aromas should mellow nicely by December.

Adding too little or much spice is a great way to ruin a creative food-inspired beer, but is a fault that can be avoided careful application of flavorings. Too much chili heat, basil leafiness, or even vanilla sweetness can turn a good idea into an unpalatable mess. Conversely, too little flavor can leave tastebuds with muddled, poorly-defined flavors. Keep in mind that spices added earlier in the brewing process (e.g. boil) tend to lose more intensity in the finished process than those added later (e.g., keg). Here’s my go-to methods for determining the dosing of spices and flavoring additions:

- **Tinctures:** Measured addition of tinctures to a finished beer is relatively foolproof. Pour yourself a pint (16oz) and count drops or milliliters of tincture to achieve your flavor profile, then multiply as needed for dosing to a keg or even directly to bottles.

- **Hot Tea test:** make a pint of tea with hot water and a measured amount of spices to get a ball-park feel for the effect of whirlpool additions.
- **Cold bottle test:** Add spices to a plastic soda bottle, pour in beer, and carbonate with a carb-cap. Taste periodically to determine flavor potential and duration of aging on spices. This test is highly representative of adding spices to a keg because finished beer is used. A boring, neutral commercial lager may give you a good idea of a spice's flavor profile.
- **Keg & test:** Add spices in a mesh bag or stainless mesh hop tube to your keg and taste periodically to determine when extraction is satisfactory. Add more spices if necessary and agitate the keg so pours don't consist of only concentrate off the bottom of the keg. Push beer to a clean keg or bottle once the desired flavor is achieved.
- **Blend:** Brew a beer with spices or adjunct quantities erring on the high side, then blend with un-spiced beer as necessary to bring the beer into balance.

Brewing beer inspired by food is a fantastic way to add excitement, and innovation, and challenges to your homebrewing. Beers brewed with food inspiration can also be entered in competitions, generally falling into the category for spice, herb, or vegetable (30A) beers.

So here's to your next innovative and inspiring brew. I've spent too much time in the spice aisle and have kegs to fill with exciting brews to share this summer. Prepare your palates for beer with flavor!

Cheers!

Christophe

## Secretary's Corner

*By Jordan Couture*

Happy April Club Members,

I hope you are all excited for National Beer Day on April 7th. Remember, if you are going to follow the rules of the Cullen-Harrison Act, you have to keep those brews under 4% ABV. Speaking of brewing, we are going to do a virtual Brewathon this year. I will open the Zoom meeting at 8am and leave it running until 5pm so people can come and go.

Topic: Brewathon

Time: May 1, 2021 08:00 AM Alaska

Meeting ID: 845 3343 8141

Passcode: GNBC2021

We are still conducting our meetings virtually. Below is this month's Zoom information.

Topic: April GNBC Meeting

Time: Apr 20, 2021 07:00 PM Alaska

Meeting ID: 878 9315 9593

Passcode: GNBC2021

Cheers and have a homebrew!

Jordan M. Couture

Secretary



Sichuan peppercorns, allspice, anise, cardamom, and dried red chilis used in Lap Cheung Chinese sausage... a potential inspiration for my next mouth-numbing saison.



# The GNBC Summer Camp Out!

*By John Trapp*

Most everyone has heard that the summer campout will take place during the second weekend in July down at Trail River Campground Group Campsite from Thursday the 8th at noon, until Sunday the 11th at noon. Yep, 3 nights of Trail River fun. There are a lot of things to do in the area, fishing on the Russian (the reds will be in) as well as Seward. In fact, there were talks of a charter out of Seward one of those days. If I hear more I'll let you know. There are tons of trails to hike if that's your thing, mountain biking, or just wander along the shores of Kenai Lake. Plus, the campsite has horseshoes, volleyball, and bad mitten.

The campsite has around 12 spots for RV's, plus you can pitch a tent if you're a car camper. There's also a very nice pavilion where The Group meal will take place on Saturday evening (around 6:00) so start thinking about a potluck dish to share. So mark your calendars and plan on having a great 3 day weekend on the Kenai.

## Beer Podcast from GNBC Member

*By Steve Johnson*

In a story dated March 18th, the Anchorage Press published an article about GNBC member Brian Hall's new Alaska Craft Beer Podcast, "showcasing the finest craft beverages in Alaska and the stories of the people behind them."<sup>1</sup>

So far Hall has posted these episodes:

- Chris Fassett of La Bodega
- Magnetic North Brewing
- Girdwood Brewing Company
- Brewer Spotlight: Cole Tamblyn
- Barrels with Boone

The podcast is available at <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1610974> and other podcast outlets.

## 2021 GNBC Homebrew Equipment Club Fundraiser Auction

*Items Donated by Kevin Metkonig*

Instructions: Email item number and bid to Christophe at [vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org) by April 30, 2021. Highest bid for a given item wins. Pickup items in Anchorage.

Auction Items:

1. 15 gallon Ace Roto-Mold HDPE conical tank with heat exchanger mounted in lid. No stand included. \$100
2. 2-roller malt mill with 10-15lb hopper and wood base. \$100
3. 5x 5-gal class carboys. \$15 each
4. Stainless RIMS heater with Inkbird temp controller. ½" NPT threaded ports. \$50
5. Blichmann Hop Rocket \$70
6. Water filter housing \$10 (lightly used carbon filter included)

Pictures available on our website, at the bottom of the page.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Anchorage Press story is at [https://www.anchoragepress.com/food\\_and\\_drink/veteran-beer-enthusiast-hall-starts-up-alaska-craft-beer-podcast/article\\_1495a556-85e7-11eb-9afc-3f4bb507edf0.html](https://www.anchoragepress.com/food_and_drink/veteran-beer-enthusiast-hall-starts-up-alaska-craft-beer-podcast/article_1495a556-85e7-11eb-9afc-3f4bb507edf0.html).

# A HUGE Thanks to our 2021 Supporters

Present your GNBC card at these suppliers for a members-only discount. See each store for details.



8401 Sandlewood Place Anchorage, AK 99507 | 907-561-5771



**MATHESON**  
ask...The Gas Professionals™



THANK YOU  
to our 2020  
sponsors!



We're  
recognizing  
them again this  
year, when they  
really need OUR  
support

