

# Saison

A Story, Some Experiments, Yeast and Rants

# The Setup

- The Legend
  - Farmers brewing for farm hands
  - Yes, there were farmhouse brewers, but....
- The one mention of Saison in De Clerck
  - Liege – “en saison”
  - Also a few other places, but always this same notion “Season”

# My Personal History

- ▣ 1997-8(?) – 1<sup>st</sup> taste
  - ▣ Jay Baum – brewer at Crown City Brewing Co, Pasadena CA
  - ▣ Dry yeast
  - ▣ Spiced out the wazoo
- ▣ Set me on a path

# Manifesto – A Saison Must Be:

- Dry – Thou shall not make a Saison that is not dry. These beers require an amazing level of attenuation. Any sweet characters should be perceptual - e.g. a sugar top note, an herbal sweetness.
- Earthy – A dry beer with nothing interesting is just a boring moisture suck. The best Saisons have a middle character of malt and earthy tones that set up the finish.
- Spicy – You need tones on the palette that grab and wake you up. A cinnamon thing, a pepper bite, herbal, hot. This spice breaks the earthy middle and leads right to the CO2 sting of the finish
- Lively – Nothing worse than a “dead” Saison. The beer needs to be alive in the glass with plenty of carbonation. A touch of sourness can boost the heart rate as well.
- Yeast Driven – More than any other style, Saison is defined by its yeast. Treated properly, the strains produce every one of the necessary characters for our beer. Damn the man and his ways.

# Saison Series

- The Seasons
  - Printemps, Ete, Automne, d'Hiver
- The Farm Series
  - Saison Potiron, Saison Vin, Saison Fleur, Saison Sangreal
- The WTF Series
  - Guacamole Saison, Clam Chowder Saison
- The Yeast Series
  - Trying every damn Saison strain in one wort (it's never ending)

# The Saison Quartet & Characters

- Dupont
  - The classic.
- Blaugies
  - The balance – spun from Dupont? (loves heat)
- Thierz
  - The reliable – damn near bullet proof
- Fantôme
  - The wild, the wacky – various strains, plus Brett

# A Personal Plea

- ▣ Standing out by Enthusiasm is Great
  - ▣ But not so tasty
- ▣ I know I'm a big believer in "Saison is a great experimentation base", but...
- ▣ Crimes committed in the name of Farmhouse
  - ▣ Spices – too quick to reach for, too many used
  - ▣ Flavors – too many, too piled on top of each other
  - ▣ Funk – too much

# But, but Brett....

- Brett is a great contributor of flavor
- Brett belongs in Saisons (see Dupont/Fantôme)
  - Dupont – 2 strains of Sacc, 1 of Brett
  - Yeah, I know what the BJCP says
- Brett should not be the dominant flavor
- Co-Pitch – make it play the supporting cast member role.



# The Recipe I Brew The Most



# Saison Experimentale

- 5.5 gallons, 1.048, 20 IBUs
  - 8.75lbs Pils
  - 0.5 lbs Flaked Wheat (or Oats depending)
  - 1.0 lb Table Sugar
- Mash at 148°F for 60 minutes
  - 0.5 oz Magnum (12.9%AA) for 60 minutes
- Water: Golden Bitter Profile
- Yeast: Have at it

# When Not Brewing That One

- Malt
  - Base of pilsner – prefer German (unless I'm playing)
  - Adjunct – Wheat/Oats/Oat Malt
  - Speciality – Munich or Caramunich/Caravienne
  - Roast/Toast – Biscuit/Aromatic and Carafa Special for color
- Mash
  - Usually lazy – single infusion at 148°F to maximize simple sugars
  - Feeling ambitious – Vapeur mash – infusion raises
    - 115°F for 20 minutes total
    - 130°F for 30 minutes total
    - 145-148°F for 30 minutes total
    - 155°F for 30 minutes
    - 170°F for 15 minutes

# More Saison Ingredients

- Hops
  - Nobles or cleans for a classic – Magnum, Styrian, Wye Valley, Tett, Saaz etc
  - New “Americans” for an IPA spin
    - Really started liking this with Amarillo.
    - Don’t go super fruit crazy with your Galaxy and Mosaics
- Yeast
  - Pitch blend – more strains more fun
- Additional Flavors
  - I prefer tinctures for non-resinous items, tisanes for resinous items
  - Fruits should be fermented down

# The Method

- ▣ Chill aggressively: 63-65°F
- ▣ Pitch 1-2 quart starter (don't underpitch)
- ▣ Aerate well
- ▣ Control ferment at 65°F for 2-3 days of primary, then allow to rise.
- ▣ Open Ferment



# Why Open Ferment

- The Stall
- Initial results of Experimentation – 5 of 6 saw the stall
- Further results – 12 reporters so far – 11 of 12 observed the stall
- No reason not to use the Dupont strains with an open ferment!

# Yeast Notes

- The Duponts:
  - Wyeast 3724 – This is the phenol driver, drier
  - WLP 565 – This is the fruit, less dry
- The Thiriezs:
  - Wyeast 3711 – Thicker feel on mouth
  - Belle Saison – so much meh



# More Yeast Notes

- The Others
  - Wyeast 3726 Farmhouse
    - So much tropical, with cinnamon, spice and fruit
    - One of my favorites (and now year round!)
  - Omega Labs Saisonstein
    - A hybrid – intended to be less finicky than other hybrids
    - Does not like the hot treatment in my brews
    - A Note About Blends
  - WLP 585 Saison III – Vault Strain
    - One of my other favorites
    - Fruit driven, lightly lactic

# And Now Your Turn

- ▣ Two to Try Tonight
- ▣ The Yeast Bay Wallonian Blend II
- ▣ The Yeast Bay Wallonian Blend III
- ▣ Let's take notes!

Questions?