

Beer Packaging



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Beer Packaging Options

Agenda

- Why is Beer Packaging Important?
- What can I put my beer in?
 - What's the best way to “package” my beer?
 - What are the benefits of each method?
 - What are the shortcomings of each method?
 - What's each method going to cost me?
- How do I get my Beer into the Package?
 - Gravity
 - Beer gun
 - Counter pressure bottle filler



Why am I talking about this today?

- Deliver better tasting beer
- Age beer better
- Win more competitions
- Get more gear!



Why proper beer packaging is important

- Avoid oxidation
 - “A headspace of air destroyed this beer!” NBB talk at NHC
- Preserve carbonation
- Keep the beer tasting fresh
- Keep the beer tasting like it should
- Avoid spillage
- Provide a “respectable” package



How can I “package” my beer?

- Capping (Bottling)
- Corking
- Growler Filling
- Canning



Why do you need to package your beer?

- Take it to share with friends
- Take it to SBE meeting to share with serious beer friends
- Send it to a competition
- Set it aside to age for later



Bottling options

- Keeping the beer in the bottle
 - Capping
 - Flip Top
 - Corking/Caging
 - Screw Caps
- Getting the beer IN the bottle
 - Beer gun
 - Counter pressure filler
 - Using bottle filler from bucket or keg



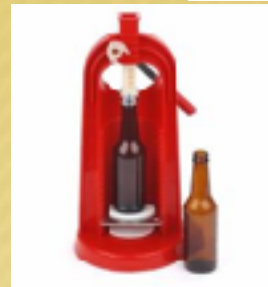
General Hints when packaging

- Clean the “package” well
- Sanitize it completely
- Chill it (do not freeze it) 10-15 minutes in a refrigerator is plenty



Capping

- Good for “bottle conditioning” beer
- Inexpensive option
- Requires a capper
 - Hand-held - \$11-\$20
 - Bench Cappers - \$35 -
 - Drill Press



Bottle Capping

- Pros
 - Inexpensive (relatively)
 - Easy to get
 - Caps can be customized with logo
 - Can use most any capped size bottles (12 – 20+ oz)
 - Sharing home brew is easy with hand-out bottles
- Cons
 - Lots of cleaning and sanitizing
 - When bottle aging, it's slower to carbonate
 - Takes up a lot of space
 - Requires some kind of drying rack
 - They break easily
 - They're heavy in bulk
 - Colossal PITA



Different types of Caps

- Plain old caps
- Cold Activated – changes color when cold
- Oxygen Absorbing – when activated by water, they will absorb oxygen in bottle headspace; no evidence that they work better; cost a bit more and don't like being wet prior to capping – can absorb flavors, advance aging
- Oxygen barrier caps – liner has a “special curved profile” preventing oxygen from getting in (don't they all?)



Bottling Flip Top bottles

Blue, Green, Brown, Clear “Grolsch” type bottle

–Pros

- No need to throw away caps
- No “capper” required
- Easy to reuse
- Nice “green” solution
- Nice as a gift

–Cons

- Clean and sanitize as usual
- A **lot** more expensive
- Heavy



Bottling using corks

Typically used in beers to age or “special” beer

•Pros

- Fancy – makes a great gift
- Easy to label
- Can age well under good circumstances
- Larger bottle formats to 750 ml

•Cons

- Expensive – bottles, corks, cages
- Requires special equipment - Corker
- Work intensive to do
- Cork Taint



Corking Gear



- “Portuguese Floor Corker - \$70
- Double Lever Corker - \$30
- Queen Lux Pro corker - \$135
- Colonna Capper/Corker - \$80
- Corks, cages



Screw-top P.E.T. Bottles

Polyethylene terephthalate

- Good for short-term storage, transit (like to a SBE meeting) (hours or days and maybe up to a couple months under ideal conditions)
- Key to keep O_2 out and CO_2 in – Get O_2 “Barrier” Bottles
- Great for yeast starter



P.E.T Bottle Pros and Cons

- Pros
 - Reusable
 - Lightweight
 - Available in several sizes
 - Retains CO₂ well
 - Simple to clean – but be careful of scratching interior
 - Light weight
 - Relatively inexpensive
- Cons
 - Can crack or break under extreme circumstances
 - Can be susceptible to oxygen
 - Not great for aging



How do I get my beer
into the bottle?



Beer Guns

- Blichman Beer Gun - \$100
- The Last Straw - \$100



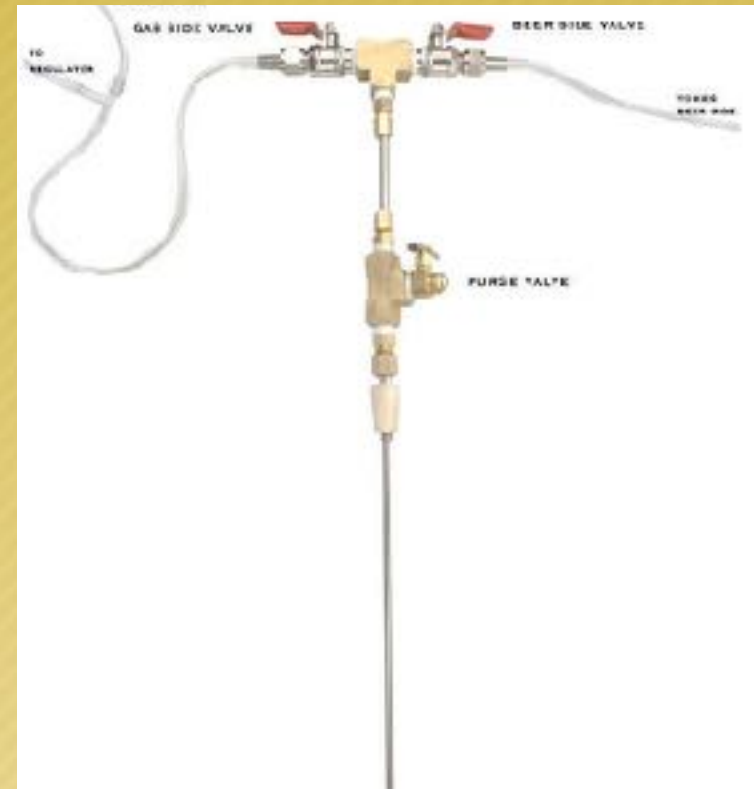
Counter Pressure Bottle Filling

- Getting beer into your bottles at the right CO₂ level
- Pros
 - Allows cellaring without the worries of sludge in the bottle
 - Beer is ready to go as soon as it's capped
 - Easy to share with friends
 - Requires a “rig” – (More gear!)
- Cons
 - Requires 3 hands
 - Requires a “rig”



Counter pressure Bottle Fillers

- 3-handed model - \$75-\$100
- WilliamsWarn - \$400



How to use a counter pressure bottle filler

<https://www.morebeer.com/products/counter-pressure-bottle-filler.html>



How to fill a bottle with The Last Straw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CWLN0XDz_U



Bottling with WilliamsWarn Counter Pressure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-w2wwNtd3U>



Filling a Growler

- Pros
 - Easy to fill
 - Easy to transport for sharing
 - Inexpensive to Expensive
 - Glass Bottle - \$5-\$20
 - Hydroflask™ (keeps beer cold longer) - \$50
 - Different sizes available
- Cons
 - Rules to obey (labeling)
 - Once open, short life span



Filling a Growler



Canning Home Brew

- 12 oz or 16 oz cans
- 32 oz Crowler seamers
- Pros
 - Lightweight
 - Very professional look
- Cons
 - Need labels/labeler
 - Need to buy cans in bulk
 - Very expensive...for now



Canning beer –
if you dare
Expensive



Summary

- There are many ways to package your beer
- Use the right method for the purpose intended
- Take advantage of the myriad tools available
- Ask your friends to borrow stuff until you can get your own
- **BREW ON!**



Special Thanks

- Andy Gamelin
- Jim Bordier
- Chris Banker
- Corey Magers
- Doug Brown
- Curt Wittenberg



References

- Mrbeer.com Blog 1/10/2017 The Best Beer Bottles for Every Type of Homebrewer
- <https://learn.kegerator.com/counter-pressure-bottle-filler/>
- Beer Oxidation: Chemistry, Sensory Evaluation and Prevention – NHC 2017 New Belgium's Andy Mitchell and Robert Hall presentation

