

## Merri Mashers Brewing Club

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# mmm

MAKE.TALK.DRINK.BEER.

## LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Wow, what a HUGE month it's been for the Merri Mashers! As mentioned in our last newsletter, nine members headed up to Canberra for ANHC4, as well as a couple of prospective members.

We were told it was the largest contingent from any visiting club for this year's conference. There might have been a few attendees who'd never heard of the Merri Mashers before we got there, but we well and truly fixed that by the event's end.

We kept our club shirts locked away for day 1, but on day 2 we synced up and all wore our logo with pride. There's more detail later in this edition, but can I just take this opportunity to say how stoked and proud I am of the club's big win in the "Ultimate Session Beer" competition. It's our first win on the big stage, and to have come so quickly for our fledgling club shows the skill and passion of all those involved.

Still on ANHC, I really enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with guys from a lot of other brew clubs across Victoria and Australia. We got some great insight into how they run things, and quite a few of them are keen to get some intra-club events happening.

I'm a big fan of the idea, so watch this space!

Finally, I look forward to hosting our club's members at the inaugural case swap in November, which might also serve as the Mashers' Xmas party given it replaces our November meeting, and we don't have a meeting in December.

I hope to see you all there!

Cheers!  
- Justin

## SEPTEMBER RECAP

This will definitely go down in history as one of our "bigger" meetings. Wow. So much high %ABV beer.

It was a real pleasure to welcome so many new members to the club this September at our final meeting at the Gertrude for the year. Our community outreach is working, Mashers! Bring on more prison brew days!

It was also great to see a few familiar faces attending meetings again. The final ANHC details were organised, details for the October meeting were settled and winning brewers from VicBrew congratulated.

Then came the beers. And the blackness. Great stuff Mashers, but I know at least one of us who will be taking it easier at the Terminus!

## OCTOBER MEETING

Tuesday October 28 sees the Merri Mashers moving venue to the Terminus Hotel in Clifton Hill. With 50% and 25% discounts for craft beers on-tap, a planned ANHC recap and the finalisation of case swap details, this meeting has all the ingredients of a success.

Remember, we're upstairs at the Terminus in Clifton Hill, not the recently renovated Terminus in Richmond. Clifton Hill, not Richmond!

Because of the discounted beer, you may have to check in on the night and collect some cards or vouchers. Only paid members will be eligible for the drink vouchers.

See you all there. And if you haven't already, don't forget to check in with Luke on the night and tell him the details of your case swap beer so it can appear in the booklet!

# ANHC WRAP-UP

ANHC was held the previous weekend in Canberra and a contingent of Merri Mashers headed up to introduce our club to the Australian brewing scene. It was a riotous few days, with hundreds of beers, meads, ciders, prizes and more.

The first thing to mention is that our club's entry into ANHC's "Ultimate Session Beer" competition (our Ronnie Ryan Red Ale) was voted #1 on Club Night! This earned the club another addition to our equipment library: we won a miracle box (jockey box) for our efforts. Alright Mashers! A giant thanks goes to everyone who helped brew the winning beer at Pentridge Prison, and of course, much congratulations to committee member Shannon Brooks for his award-winning recipe.

The conference itself was varied and stimulating. The club's favourite talks included those from John Keeling, the Head Brewer of Fullers, on re-using mash runnings and the brews and methods of old, and Vinnie Cilurzo of Russian Rivers' talks on sour beers and IPAs. Some excellent tastings were had of IPAs, pale ales and a variety of six super-tasty meads.



Then of course there were the psychedelic nights of food, beer and merriment. The state of Victoria came away with the National Trophy at the Gala Dinner and the envy from the less accomplished states was palpable. The club often pushed on into the early hours, sampling Canberra's best beers from its best bars and bemoaning the city's lack of kebabs night after night. At least one Merri Masher risked the wide roads of Canberra in a speeding shopping trolley and walked away unscathed. The stuff of legends.

In big news for the club, committee member Nathan Keatch won himself a 20l Braumeister system worth \$2500, flooring all ANHC attendees and instantly shaming the rest of our brew rigs into obscurity. On the flipside, Nathan now no longer has any skill as a brewer, and the strength of his future brews will be constantly attributed to his Braumeister. Them's the breaks Nathan, you lucky bastards, lucky "brewer".

But in all seriousness: a HUGE thanks to Speidel and the guys at Grain and Grape in Yarraville for sponsoring ANHC and providing the Braumeister. You guys are legends!

Club President Justin Spicer and committee member Luke Corbin also walked away with prizes, some of which will be used in club activities going forward (see the experimental hop article in this newsletter). Thanks to Binti and all sponsors for that.

And then there was Club Night. A rough count totalled a hundred home-brewed beers on offer, twenty of which were from the Canberra Brewers alone, served out of (we kid you not) a giant to-scale viking ship full of ice. Other great stands included the Excalibar from Westgate Brewers and the surfboard font from the Inner Sydney Brewers. Big thanks to Keg King and Grain & Grape and all our sponsors for helping us out with our font.

The White Labs yeast vial taps went down a treat and our ANHC IPA single-hop challenge was well enjoyed, attracting a lot of compliments, so well done Mashers on settling on a unique idea and succeeding at it. No other club had such a cohesive selection of beers on offer.

ANHC 2016: here we come!



## NOVEMBER CASE SWAP

November 23 is the official date for the inaugural Merri Mashers Case Swap! This prestigious event will be held in Thornbury at the President's house and will feature far too many kegs, way too much food and a surprising surplus of handsome, urbane and all-round excellent brewers. You will need to pre-register for this event, and it is for paid members only.

If you are brewing a beer for the swap and haven't already done so, make sure you contact Luke Corbin by email, through Facebook or on AHB with the details of your beer. When these are all collated a booklet will be printed and distributed on the day to make identifying the beers easier.

The Case Swap is being held in lieu of a November meeting, so even if you're not brewing a beer for the swap, come along and partake in the festivities! We have two more spots available for the swap, two more kegs available for brewers wanting to offer something on tap, and there are still opportunities for people to bring along or cook food on the day. Contact Tim M. if you want to get in on the food action and Justin if you want in on the beer action!

## IPA PRE-COMP

The IPA pre-comp is officially locked into the club calendar, scheduled for our first 2015 meeting on January 27. The Pre-Comp is going to be held to a similar format as our free-hop tasting last May. Twelve brewers will bring twelve IPAs, and all members will then taste them blind and write down feedback and scores. At the end of the night, the results are collated, a winner is declared, feedback is handed out and discussion ensues.

The free-hop tasting was a raging success and this more formal approach to IPAs should be excellent.

If you want to present an IPA, jump onto Facebook and register your beer. There are only a couple of places left (due to time constraints) so be quick!

Why is this a "pre-comp"? Because the Merri Mashers are in preliminary negotiations to host our first proper competition next April/May: an IPA Comp open to the masses - and we need to train our palates!

## HOP ZONE CHALLENGE

Many Merri Mashers Made Much Mirth at the recent ANHC conference and one of our favourite co-conspirators was the inimitable Hendo from Brewcult.

He has kindly offered to attend one of our 2015 meetings and judge a pale ale competition using one of his famous recipes, that of the 20 minute mash, 20 minute boil Hop Zone. This will be a first for the club - a comparative method and system-based competition, where we all use the same recipe and ingredients and have our efforts judged by a professional brewer.

Judging and tasting will probably happen during the March or April meeting. More to come.

## EXPERIMENTAL HOPS

The club has won some hops courtesy of Bintani.

These hops are being developed for commercial production, but are currently unavailable. Stats are 18.6%A, 6.5%B and 2.1% oils. From Bintani: "Selected for exceptionally high alpha levels and pungent aroma".

Our task is to brew with these hops and determine what style they are most suited for, then get back to Bintani with our impressions.

If you want to be one of the lucky brewers to brew with these hops, register your beer on Facebook. Be quick as we only have enough hops for twelve hop-forward beers - you can brew whatever you like, as long as it is hop-forward.

We will probably compare and taste these beers during the February meeting.

## CLUB RESOURCES

*Club Website:*

<http://www.merrimashers.org>

*Blog:*

<http://www.merrimashers.org/blog/>

*Facebook:*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/merri.mashers>

*Aussie Home Brewer:*

<http://aussiehomebrewer.com/forum/101-the-merri-mashers/>