

Merri Mashers Brewing Club

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mmm

MAKE.TALK.DRINK.BEER.

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Welcome to the final edition of our club newsletter for 2014. What a terrific year it has been for the Merri Mashers, we've grown to around 40 members, our club meetings have fantastic attendances, and we've become a real thriving community, with information, equipment, ingredients and of course beers being freely shared around on a regular basis.

All this and we haven't even turned one year old yet ... impressive!

I really enjoyed our inaugural case swap event this month, it was great to see more than 20 Mashers gathered around my back yard, beer in hand, and for many of you, feet in spa! The weather was great, and huge kudos to the food crew who turned out a fantastic spread to go with all the great brews.

This is definitely the kind of event that will become a permanent fixture on our club calendar.

In other news, we're planning our club Xmas celebration in lieu of a December meeting, and the committee is also working hard in pulling together everything that needs to fall into place for us to hold our first ever open comp.

At this stage it looks like we'll focus on the new IPA styles in the draft BJCP guidelines (e.g. Black, White, Red etc), and the comp will be held in late May. More details to follow soon.

I'd like to wish everyone a happy and safe Xmas/new year, and thank you all again for making our club such a fantastic success.

Cheers!
- Justin

OCTOBER RECAP

The October meeting was another excellent success, with many firsts for the club. It was the first meeting to be held at the Terminus, the first meeting to involve drink discounts and membership cards and the first meeting where we broke into smaller workshops for beer feedback after the agenda was dispensed with.

Everything seemed to work well and it was good to see a few new faces. The club just keeps growing - awesome.

The Terminus' 50% and 25% off drink discounts were particularly (and obviously!) popular and we look forward to our next meeting at the venue.

Bottoms up!

CHRISTMAS CATCH-UP

There will be no December meeting for the club, but there will be a gathering December 11 at the Gertrude Hotel to celebrate Christmas and mark the end of 2014.

This is a "no home brew" event and more of a pub catch-up than a formal Merri Masher meeting.

Starting at 5:30PM, come along for the famous Gertrude parma and have a few delicious craft beers at one of the club's favourite haunts. We will probably move on from the Gertrude to Forster's Beer Hall towards the end of the night, so meet us there if you can't arrive until late!

It should be a good night. After December 11 there are no club events until the January meeting and IPA Pre-Comp on January 27.

NOVEMBER CASE SWAP

What an awesome day this was!

Many Mashers graced the Presidents' backyard last weekend for our inaugural Case Swap and took away several Saisons, some Stouts, two ESBs, a few IPAs, a pair of Amber Ales, a Brown Ale and much more after a day of serious merriment. It was the club's first Case Swap day but will absolutely NOT be its last.

The weather was perfect, the food, beer and spa were great and the people were chilled and friendly. Massive thanks to everyone involved for their dedication and work bringing the event together.



It was no light affair, with over 400 beers and 50 kilograms of grain changing hands and a smoker, BBQ and spit providing delicious meats. Thanks to all the Mashers who partook! If you have any feedback on the event, don't forget to bring it up at the next meeting or email it through to the committee. These events are for all of us, remember!



JANUARY IPA PRE-COMP

The beers and brewers have been locked in and the IPA Pre-Comp has been settled for January 27 at the Terminus hotel, the same venue as our October meeting.

Beginning at the standard 7PM start time the club will run through the agenda in 30 minutes, with the tastings then to commence at 7:45PM sharp. Each club member involved will be given paper, pen and scoresheets, and will blind-taste silently each of the twelve IPAs in succession. Timekeeping will be strictly kept - 5 minutes per each of the 12 beers - and general discussion with and by the brewers will ensue at 8:45PM.

By 9PM the official results will have been tabulated and we can crown a winning brewer and recipe on the night. Good luck to all our brewers!

Doing an IPA Pre-Comp in this manner will give us insight into what hosting our official competition in May will be like.

Following the meeting we hope to have robust discussions about what worked, what didn't, and how to best host our first ever open competition as a club. It will be challenging but worthwhile.

GBW SHENANIGANS

Good Beer Week is being held next May 16-24 and the Merri Mashers have been approached by a number of businesses about possible events and activities for us to take part in. There is the possibility of brewing at The Gertrude for their Pint of Origin program and the Catfish (a reasonably newish bar further down Gertrude St) have put their hand up for a collaboration. If you have any suggestions for club events at Good Beer Week 2015, bring it up at the next meeting, post about it on Facebook or send the committee an email.

COMP DATES

For your upcoming Brew Plans, the next few comps - as emailed - are ...

Beerfest	Feb 27 - Mar 1	Melb Brewers
Belgian Beerfest	Apr 18	YV Brewers
IPA Competition	May 24	Merri Mashers
Stout Extravaganza	Jul 5	Westgate

THUNDER ROAD BREW

The Merri Mashers have been cordially invited by Thunder Road Brewery to collaborate on a beer. The theme is local - local beer brewed by local brewers using local ingredients at a local brewery.

The details are still being hashed out, but the gist of the thing is that the club will have an opportunity to be involved in brewing a beer on Thunder Road's pilot system and seeing it sell at the Thunder Road Brewery, with the brewery taking care of all the legal bits and pieces.

One of the main things Thunder Road wants the Merri Mashers to contribute is fresh hops.

If any club members grow their own hops at home and have a surplus of cones you are happy to donate for in this beer, then please get in contact with the committee as this will affect the direction of the brew in the weeks ahead.

This is a stellar opportunity to see the Merri Mashers logo on a tap at one of our local breweries. Ah, community! So many fuzzy feelings!

HOP ZONE BREW

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.

BINTANI HOP BREW

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 give Bintani our impressions.

The recipe has been decided upon and the ingredients distributed. A HUGE thanks to Bintani for gifting the club 100kg of grain to brew with in addition to the 1.5kg of hops.

We will compare and taste these beers during the February meeting, with Phil from Bintani.

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/>