

Merri Mashers Brewing Club

President: Justin Spicer
president@merrimashers.org

Vice-President: Kevin Hawley
khawley@optusnet.com.au

mmm

MAKE.TALK.DRINK.BEER.

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

You can cross another great milestone for the Merri Mashers off our bucket list...in addition to our success as a club up at ANHC last year, we now have a couple of category winners in a club comp!

Congratulations to Nick and Julian for picking up first places at Beerfest 2015 in the Pale Ales and Belgian categories respectively. Both their beers were clear winners, and only marginally missed out on being judged Champion Beer of Show!

We actually got 3 of our members finishing in the top 10 for pale ales, so that should bode really well for our first-ever Specialty IPA comp coming up on June 14 this year. And just as impressively, our webmaster Nathan took home top gong at GABF for his cherry porter. WOW.

I'm also really looking forward to Good Beer Week this year, now that the Mashers are officially involved. As I mentioned at our last club meeting we're turning our Ronnie Ryan Red Ale into a Red IPA, and putting it on for punters to enjoy during and around Good Beer Week.

More info inside this newsletter, but needless to say this is a great score for our club. There's so much going on at the moment, it's a great time to be a Masher!

Cheers!
- Justin

HOME MAKE IT \$\$ OFF

Home Make It, the excellent DIY store of Reservoir and Clayton fame, is offering a 10% discount to all Merri Mashers with a membership card. They stock brewstuffs as well as cheese, wine, sausage and all kind of other DIY products. Woo hoo!

EXPERIHOP RECAP

The Merri Mashers said farewell to summer with a bang during the February meeting, tasting nine pale ales brewed to the same recipe but with different yeasts, and by ten different brewers.

The aim of the exercise was to showcase the experimental hop variety "#3" so generously donated by Bintani. These hops seemed to provide peppery, dried apricot notes to most of the beers. Peter and Phil from Bintani attended and declared that the data was useful and gave the club their blessing. There was much rejoicing.

The club has more experimental hop varieties to work with, so stay tuned for the next call out for brewers. At this stage the next experimental hop tasting will be held during the September meeting in mid-spring, with slightly different parameters due to club member feedback.

Thanks again to Tim M. for stewarding and Bintani for the malt & hops. Some tasting notes from the night are available [here](#).

HONEY HOO HOO

Don't forget that the October 2015 meeting will be themed around mead, metheglyn, melomel, hip-pocrene, pyment, rhodomel, braggot and honey beers. It won't be a formal tasting event but more of an informal chat about brews and experiences.

You don't need to register your beers or anything, just rock up with them and we'll work with what we have on the night.

If you're doing a mead now is the time to get started so you can take advantage of some sweet, sweet ageing! It's easy! Honey + water + yeast.

GARDEN ALE MEETING

Wilderness foragers of the north! Don your gumboots, grab a guidebook and sally forth into the gardens and public spaces of our herbaceous city in search of gruit, for this winter the Merri Mashers will be partaking in a garden-themed gathering!

The August 2015 meeting of the Merri Mashers will be themed around alternative flavours in beer. "Garden Ales" are all about the long, pre-hop tradition of bittering ales: juniper, wormwood, mugwort, yarrow, alehoof, chamomile, legumes, mint etc.!

You'd be surprised what is growing out there. When you've found something, throw it into your brew and bring a growler along in August! A Facebook group for discussions about this meeting can be found [here](#).

GBW BREWS

A few months ago we got an email from the Catfish Hotel on Gertrude St in Fitzroy. The owners were keen to work with us in putting up an event for Good Beer Week this year. Tim M. and Justin went in to meet the guys and find out more. Turns out they wanted the club to do a brew demo and put some of our home brew on tap. Serving home brew in a pub is a pretty fuzzy area, let alone selling it. So Justin went to work on crafting a plan!

"I wanted to tie together a whole bunch of things if possible...Shannon's Red Ale had won our first ever intra-club comp...we then went on to brew this at Pentridge during their Northern Craft Beer Festival as our winning entry for ANHC's "Ultimate Session Beer" on club night. Thunder Road had also contacted us about doing a community day event with them, involving brewing a beer using hops grown at their brewery, and in our members' own yards. And of course we had our inaugural Specialty IPA comp coming up later in the year.

It all started to come together in my head.

What if we could turn our Ronnie Ryan Red into a Red IPA (one of the categories in our comp), brew it at Thunder Road using our hops, then sell it during TRB's community day and at the Catfish during our GBW event? We tentatively put the idea to our friends at TRB...and they loved it! We might even have some spare kegs to put on at other local craft beer venues in our area. So stay tuned, we'll be looking to put a contingent of Mashers together to head into TRB and get this Red IPA brewed soon!"

BEERFEST RESULTS

The Merri Mashers got busy at Beerfest 2015, with the following excellent results achieved!

PALE CONTINENTAL LAGER: 10th Nick Van Duyn, 20th Mark Spies.

WHEAT BEER: 10th Mattias Isaksson, 11th Justin Spicer, 13th Nathan Keatch, 20th Tobias Sasse.

DARK LAGER AND ALE: 22nd Tobias Sasse.

STRONG ALE AND LAGER: 11th Brook James.

PORTER AND STOUT: 12th Nick Van Duyn, 15th Kris Domagala, 16th Jacob Rogers, 28th Tim M.

PALE ALE: 1st Nick Van Duyn, 3rd Julian Robinson, 8th Nathan Keatch, 34th Mattias Isaksson.

BELGIAN: 1st Brett Lenne, 11th Jesse Swallow, 18th Tobias Sasse.

These results are awesome, especially for a not-quite-one-year-old club! Congratulations especially to Nick, Brett and Julian!

ANNIVERSARY PARTY

The March meeting will conclude early to make way for an awesome food, drink and fun-filled party at the Terminus Hotel to celebrate the first birthday of the club. It's gonna rock!

IPA COMP UPDATE

Our IPA comp has been confirmed with VicBrew and a subcommittee of Mashers to administrate it has been formed. There will be a party on comp day and all kinds of exciting sponsorships and prizes are in the works. [Save the date of June 14](#). We will go over the comp in further detail at the March meeting and put all the details in the forthcoming newsletters.

COMP DATES

Belgian Beerfest	Apr 18	YV Brewers
SpecIPA Competition	June 14	Merri Mashers
Stout Extravaganza	Jul 5	Westgate
Pale-Ale Mania	Aug 2	Worthogs

Check out the Merri Mashers Calendar for a comprehensive list of club events. [Click here!](#)

GABF GEELONG REPORT

Member Jesse Swallow reports on GABF 2015!

On a hot day towards the end of a Melbourne summer, a small contingent of Mashers headed west to sample the best beers Geelong had to offer. The early arrivers secured a prime table in a coveted undercover spot, only to be forced to abandon it later. Heading out into the blazing sun of the main stage area, we sampled many a beer, spent some quality time with the Kaiju crew, and destroyed a metric shit-tonne of gozleme. Along the way, we witnessed the announcement of fellow Masher Nathan Keatch's win in the dark ale category of the homebrew competition. Onya Keatchy!

Standout beers of the day: Southern Bay's Summergalactic was a tricky but successful blend of Belgian blonde and new-world hoppy golden. New local mob Blackman's Brewery had the simply-named Bob, which turned out to be an excellent witbier. The People's Choice winner, Hawker's Pale, lived up to its considerable hype. And the Cavalier Catfish – an imperial pilsner - turned out to be a dangerously sessionable 7-percent. If you haven't been to GABF before, it's definitely worth thinking about making a trip there next year.

BRUNSWICK FESTIVAL

Vice-President Kevin Hawley reports on Brunswick Festival opening night at Thunder Road Brewery!

Our good friends at Thunder road sent me an invitation for myself, my wife and four other Merri Mashers and partners to attend. I sent out the notification from which I'd intended to draw four respondents from a hat.

Well, exactly four people responded, so I kept my hat on my bald patch. The intended attendees were Jesse, Kris, Sean and John, along with partners or brew-buddies. However, on the night, John couldn't attend, and so he was impersonated by Josh, and his partner was impersonated by Julian (best not ask).

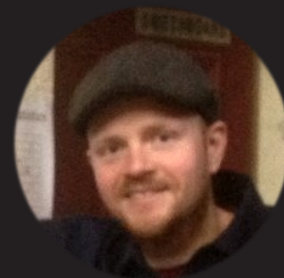
It was a great night of free beer, food and music. All the good TR beers were on, including Full Steam, Brunswick Bitter and Hop Star. The entertainment kicked off with a band of percussionists, followed by a bunch of speeches from organisers and Moreland councillors.

Then the main act, The Horns of Leon, began playing from the brewhouse bridge, followed by a surreal band wearing big skull models on their heads. It included one lady (presumably – head covered by big plastic skull, so hard to tell) who didn't play an instrument, but who danced and flirted with the attendees.

After 3 Hop Stars, it was all starting to get a bit weird. However it was a great night, and we are very grateful for the invitation from the Thunder Road Brewery.

MEET THE MEMBER

This month we talk to member Mattias Isaksson.



I am originally from Sweden but have called Australia my home for the last 3.5 years. I live in Travancore.

I started brewing back in Sweden about 4 years ago. Me and a couple of friends bought a Coopers starting kit for a friend's 30th birthday. This made me very interested in the homebrewing process.

I bought a Coopers setup for myself and the first brew I laid down was a Canadian Blonde. From memory it tasted like a hybrid between beer and cider. Still drank the lot though.

I moved on from kits to BIAB to a basic 3V system. Having a dedicated temperature controlled fridge for fermentation was the most significant improvement to my setup.

I like brewing saisons and pale ales during spring/summer and porters in the colder months. One of my go-to hops would be Vic Secret which I often use as a late addition to many of my brews.

When I'm not brewing or working you might find me at any of Melbourne's many great beer venues. The Alehouse Project has always been the closest thing to local for me. Their beer garden is a great place to discover new brews! My favorite beer is Rodenbach Caractère Rouge followed by Dale's Pale Ale and Ballast Point Sculpin. Shame we can't get Dale's Pale here in Oz!

The Australian National Homebrewers Conference (ANHC) would be my favorite beer event together with any given Merri Mashers meeting. I recommend <http://www.themadfermentationist.com> - it's a great blog. Books like *Brewing Classic Styles* and John Palmer's *How To Brew* are essential reading as well.

I am happy to be a part of the Mashers. Such an enthusiastic and creative bunch of people. Cheers to many good times ahead! Or as we say in Sweden, SKÅL!

CLUB RESOURCES

[AHB](#) [Blog](#) [Calendar](#) [Facebook](#) [Website](#)