

mmm

MAKE.TALK.DRINK.BEER.

Merri Mashers Brewing Club

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LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Welcome to the July 2014 edition of our club newsletter. There's been a lot happening since our last edition, so grab a beer and settle in!

I was really impressed with the turnout for our June club meeting at the Gertrude Hotel. I have a long history with the Gertrude, in fact I've been going there since well before Leo and Cassie took over and turned it into the fantastic craft beer mecca it is today.

Back when I first walked in (early/mid 2000's I'd reckon), it was a manky dive of a joint known as "Squizzy's" (after Squizzy Taylor I believe, a true Melbourne Gangster in the early 1900s), although I think it was actually called the Renown Hotel. I was working nearby and used to nick over with some mates at lunch time in summer to catch the cricket over a pot of Carlton (I was way too classy for VB of course). The place was mostly full of uhhh, "interesting" characters from the commission flats across the road, and there was always a thick layer of cigarette smoke trapped above our heads.

Thankfully it became the Gertrude not long after that, and things started looking up. The menu improved, but VB and Carlton Draught still dominated the taps. Then one day Coopers Pale Ale appeared, and it didn't take me long to switch. The years went by, I changed jobs and moved down the other end of the city, but still dropped in occasionally for lunch with my old team mates. Then one day, not long before Good Beer Week in 2013 if I recall, I nearly fell over when I saw what they'd done to the bar. There were 12 new taps installed and every single one of them was pouring craft beer. Not "sort of" craft beer like 150 Lashes or Little Creatures, but true craft gold, such as Moon Dog, 3 Ravens and the like. Not a VB or Carlton Draught in sight! I was in beer-lover's heaven, and I've been getting there as often as I can ever since.

I'm sure the old blokes from the commission flats weren't quite so impressed though!

So I'm obviously really stoked that Leo & Cassie are keen to work with us and get more involved with the local brewing community. The Gertrude will be a terrific "home base" for the Merri Mashers, with the dedicated space upstairs for us to share our creations, and great beer and food downstairs.

Ok, that's enough from me, I can't wait to catch up with you all again at our July meeting. And don't forget to register for ANHC later this year, there's quite a few of us heading up to Canberra in October, I hope you can join us.

Cheers!
- Justin

JUNE MEETING RECAP

The Merri Mashers gathered for our June 2014 meeting at the iconic Gertrude Hotel. It was another dreary winter's day with rain aplenty, but thankfully the deluge lifted in time for most members to walk, tram, train or cycle their way to the venue. A few of us arrived early for delicious \$14 parmas, and soon after members retreated upstairs to the Gertrude's private rooms to start the meeting proper.

The club discussed the imminent purchase of the FlavourActiv taint kit, the looming stout and pale ale competitions, possible judging opportunities at the Bayside Brewers upcoming Oktoberfest, and progress on purchasing custom Merri Masher club shirts.

After official business members proudly served their latest brews. Several delicious dark beers dominated in one corner of the room, with American Pale Ales and a Belgian SMaSH doing the rounds also. It became blurry for many after this, but not blurry enough for the three intrepid Mashers who decided to push on at the Gertrude after meeting's end. With the all-important midnight pint and debate on the politics of Scotland under their belts the last of the Merri Mashers then marched on from the venue.

The brew club gained a few new paying members during the meeting and welcomed some fresher faces also. We look forward to seeing them again soon.

EQUIPMENT LIBRARY

The Merri Mashers equipment library is coming together. At this stage it is looking to have two elements: *club-owned* equipment, purchased out of club funds (at this stage derived primarily from membership fees) and *member-owned* equipment.

Club-owned equipment will be deliberated on carefully before purchase as all items need to serve the majority of the club member's needs and be in the interest of the club.

Member-owned equipment are any items a Merri Masher privately owns and is comfortable lending out to other club members at their discretion.

The equipment registry will be launched with the new website so stay tuned!



SCHOONER MALT

The Schooner malt that Justin mentioned recently has arrived and is starting to be split for members.

Here is a description from the grower:

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My family have been malt barley growers for the past 60 years in Barellan, Riverina NSW, on an 8000 acre dry area farm. Normally the malt is a faceless commodity, sold off in bulk to graincorp where it's mixed with other varieties and "watered down" to fit specs for mega malting companies here and overseas. I have been keen for a while now to capture some of our best and turn it into malt for selected craft and home brewers. Some of our malt from last year was on record as some of the best that has ever come off our property, and was the kick starter I needed to trial this venture.

The variety is Schooner, which was released to farmers in 1983, we are one of the few farmer left still growing this variety as newer varieties with better yields and resistance to pests are now flooding the market. Schooner however continues to be highly sought after by Australian Maltsters due to its diastatic power and consistent malting results.

Growing malting barley in Australian is a tough game due to the climate etc, but also due to the strict requirements for malting barley.

This batch of Schooner malt has the following characteristics:

<i>Sown</i>	<i>- 10th May 2013</i>
<i>Harvested</i>	<i>- 4th November 2013</i>
<i>Protein</i>	<i>- 9.6%</i>
<i>Weight</i>	<i>- 75kg/hl</i>
<i>Retention</i>	<i>- 95%</i>
<i>Screenings</i>	<i>- 1%</i>

It is malted to around 7EBC so it's kind of an ale/vienna malt.

~

The Merri Mashers committee each tasted the barley and can attest to its barleyness. If you are interested in grabbing some before it all runs out, be sure to email the president and reserve your couple of kilograms.

The idea with this malt is to brew a simple beer that will really allow the malt to shine through so we can compare and contrast.

There are also plans to brew two batches of a pale ale, one with ale malt and one with Schooner, side by side in Brunswick late August. All members are encouraged to attend what could be the club's first brew day. This will be further discussed at the July meeting.



Some committee members milling the Schooner malt. It smelt delicious!

MJ YEAST FEEDBACK

A handful of members have used the online survey to lodge their Mangrove Jacks yeast feedback, but we're a long way from halfway! So c'mon Mashers, if you haven't done so already please do log on and let Cryer Malt know just what you think of MJ's lag times, attenuation and flavour.

The survey is still open at the same location: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZXCRN76> and only takes five minutes to complete.

TAINT KIT PROGRESS

The Vice-President has ordered the FlavorActiv taint kit and negotiations are underway with Thunder Road on the how and when of the event. We have twenty separate flavours with which to taint the beer with.

Final dates, places available and other details will be discussed at the July meeting, so be sure to make it to this one!

STOUT COMP RESULTS

Three Merri Mashers ended up entering beers into this month's Westgate Brewers's Stout Extravaganza competition.

And after the drum roll ...

Thomas Parker won third place in the Stout category with his Dry Stout!

Declan Jones put in a braumeister-brewed clone of the Deschutes Black Butte which achieved sixth place in the Porter category!

And Kris Nilson also scored well with his Brown Porter and Oatmeal Stout!

What a fantastic effort for our first competition.

Well done to these three groundbreaking Merri Mashers, paving the way for the rest of us to enter beers into the next comp on the horizon: Pale Ale Mania out at Diamond Creek.

ANHC 2014

Several committee members have already purchased tickets and accommodation for the Australian National Homebrewing Conference being held this October at University House in Canberra.



There is at least one car driving up with car-pooling and equipment-carrying possibilities.

For those members interested who haven't done so, you can check out the website (<http://anhc.com.au/>) and view the available ticket packages there. Early bird pricing should run into August.

When you register, don't forget to mention you're a Merri Masher, so we can sit together at club night and show off our best brews to the nation's older, more established clubs and brewers.

This 2014 ANHC looks to be a good one, with guest speakers such as Chris White from White Labs Inc. and representatives and brewers from Feral, BrewCult, Russian River and CUB breweries all sharing their knowledge.

There are also a few nice brewpubs in town, including the newest addition to Canberra's beer scene, the BentSpoke Brewing Co. in Braddon.

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/>