

mmm

MAKE.TALK.DRINK.BEER.

Merri Mashers Brewing Club

President: Justin Spicer
justin@spicer.com.au

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

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Welcome to the Summer edition of our club newsletter. Happy 2015 to you all, I hope you had an enjoyable Xmas/new year break, with many great beers involved I'm sure!

I'm really looking forward to this year with the Mashers, we'll celebrate our 1st anniversary, hold our first ever Good Beer Week event, and continue to grow and thrive as a club. I have to admit I'm still reeling a little from our January meeting where a whopping 7 new members joined up on the night, taking us to nearly 50 already. And just as impressive was the record attendance, with around 30 of you getting stuck into our IPA tasting/judging event.

That event will be covered in more detail later in this edition, but I'll just say it was a great opportunity for us to learn some more lessons about formal beer tasting and judging. Thank you to all those who volunteered to make a beer for the event, I hope you got some valuable feedback from the judging sheets. With so many people judging, I'm sure it was at the very least wide & varied!

A big thanks to Luke for organising the event, his passion and dedication to task on these things is impressive...thanks also to Shannon and Viv for their stewarding duties on the night.

I hope you enjoy a few additions we're making to the newsletter from this month, with our "Meet the Member" section, and a snippet from Jordan on a recent beer-infused jaunt back to his mother land.

I encourage you all to consider contributing similar articles for our member's enjoyment in future editions!

Cheers,
- Justin.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The club kicked off its first Christmas party in style last December, with a jaunt starting at the Gertrude and then moving on to Forester's Beer Hall, where tasty brews and excellent pizzas were had by all.

Some piked too early, missing out on a tour of Forester's keg room, but it may have been worth it for the lack of a hangover ... nah!



This event was such a success the club will definitely do something like it again in 2015.

Go Mashers!

MEAD MADNESS

Mead, metheglyn, melomel, hippocrene, pyment, rhodomel, braggot... the names just roll off your tongue, don't they?

At the October 2015 meeting we will dive drunk-ly into a deep vat of honey wine, and emerge intoxicated, inspired.... and possibly insane.

The combination of honey, water, and yeast can produce magical results; get some brews happening now for best results - or just brew a braggot/honey-beer a few weeks beforehand for a cheap and cheerful version of the same.

PRE-COMP HIJINKS

The IPA Pre-Comp went off without a hitch last Tuesday, January 27 after the standard meeting.

A huge thanks to the Terminus for putting up with us on the night and providing glassware, refrigeration, cheap tasty beer and smiles all round.

First prize went to Julian R., second to Nick V.D. and third to Dave W. Congrats!

Full Pint - your LHBS - generously donated some White Labs yeasts to the cause. The placing beers got first pick, but everyone who submitted a beer also received a yeast. Thanks Cocko and Spiesy!



CALENDAR DATES

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

Beerfest	Feb 27 - Mar 1	Melb Brewers
Belgian Beerfest	Apr 18	YV Brewers
IPA Competition	May/June	Merri Mashers
Stout Extravaganza	Jul 5	Westgate
Pale-Ale Mania	Aug 2	Worthogs

Check out the Merri Mashers Calendar for all club events. [Click here!](#)

CUB FOR TOURISTS

The Merri Mashers committee recently tried to organise a hostile take-over of the Carlton & United Breweries by getting the club to muckrake on one of their "tours" - but instead of a large Masher army, only a dedicated, hardened posse made it - guerilla style.

The three Mashers who headed over to Carlton & United Breweries in Abbotsford this January did their best to disrupt proceedings, but alas, and as the tour guide pointed out - there's a computer safeguard in place for every possible malfunction.

In all seriousness, the CuB tour was a good lark.

For \$40 you get an hour-long tour, a standard pub feed and six to twelve generous tasters of beer, depending on how charming/intimidating you are. The tour covers deliveries, mashing, boiling and bottling and the SABMiller workhorse is fascinating for its automation. The factory could basically run and make beer itself.

Apparently CuB will "sometimes use hops". You can't see the fermentation tanks for "fear of contamination". We also learnt that Germany doesn't grow hops and VB drinkers are the lowest of the low - the tour guide really had it in for them - but in the end she won even us hardened home brewer types over as she was a home-brewer herself.

After the tour and feed, the posse strolled through glorious Richmond and finished the night at Mountain Goat, where very tasty West Coast style IPAs were on offer, as well as a cucumber mint summer ale.

ANNIVERSARY TIME

There's definitely going to be an event in March to mark one year of Merri Masher mayhem. Nothing is locked in yet - so if you think of something awesome for the club to do (drink beer somewhere?) then chuck it on Facebook or email the committee.

IPA COMP

Our IPA comp has been confirmed with VicBrew and we need to start recruiting volunteers. We will go over this in further detail at the February meeting, but until then - consider if you are keen to judge, steward, brew or simply drink for prosperity!

JORDAN IN THE U.S.A.

Merri Masher Jordan Elwell recently visited some breweries in the U.S. - here is his report!

"After revelling in as much American craft beer as possible during the twelve days of Christmas in Chicago (try staying sober with \$10 Dogfish Head sixers), my partner and I headed west for the adventure we had been drooling over. Flying into L.A. the day after New Year's, we hired a car and headed north on the 101 for that bountiful land mercifully sworn to our forebears: Northern California. Starting from a list of a dozen breweries that I've long dreamt of visiting, we settled on a mere three time would allow: Sierra Nevada of Chico, Lagunitas of Petaluma, and Russian River of Santa Rosa.

Sierra Nevada is really, really far from everything else in California. But there was something about leaving it out from a so-called beer tour that bordered on sacrilege, so we set out for there first. The free guided tour brought us from dough-in to packaging, with stops in between to fill our glasses and observe SN's sustainability efforts in action. It ended with a tasting of a dozen or so currently tapped beers, most of which I'd never seen before. Highlight: the hop storage room. It smelled like America.

After stocking up on schwag at Lagunitas, we drove a little further to what could be America's most fabled maker of craft beer: Russian River Brewing. I say fabled because of the household name it's earned amongst beer geeks despite being only minimally distributed. It's virtually unobtainable outside of California, and even at a prominent craft beer store in San Francisco, I was greeted by a clerk announcing that a case of Pliny had just been stocked and there was a maximum of one bottle per person. So when we arrived at the tiny, unassuming brewpub in Santa Rosa, I was certain we were at the wrong place.

It was a Tuesday night, but the place was packed with both locals and out-of-state visitors alike lining up to taste Vinnie Cilurzo's famed hop bombs and nuanced sours. We started with an 18-glass paddle of everything on tap; unbelievably, this was only a portion of the mainstay brews. Everything we tried was truly special, from their early favourite Blind Pig and the mythical Pliny the Elder to the delicate Supplication, Sanctification and Consecration sours. I left with a smile on my face, and a heap of bottles I had to figure out how to get back to Australia.

In hindsight I would NOT recommend making this return trip in only six days, as 300km is a long way to drive each morning with a perpetual hangover. But the ubiquity of fine beer in Northern California greatly impressed me, and it excited me to return and watch our own craft beer revolution unfold here in Victoria."

BINTANI HOP BREW

The February meeting is looking good with many Mashers brewing with the experimental hops. The recipe was updated in the New Year, and while most have stuck to it there are rumours of at least one brewer step mashing instead of doing a single step infusion ... what's done is done, but remember brewers, this is supposed to be a comparative experiment with only two independent variables: your equipment, and the yeast used. We're aiming for the same residual sugars!

The February meeting, again held at the Terminus, should be a great opportunity for tastings & an informal chat with the Bintani boys about the brews.

MEET THE MEMBER

This new regular section for the newsletter allows different Mashers to tell us all about their brewing!

This month we talk to club Treasurer **Tim Martin**.



"I live in Pascoe Vale and was one of the original incorporating members. I started brewing two years ago, and my first beer was the 'Pascoe Vale Ale'. I currently brew on a 50l Braumeister. I love Super Hoppy American IPAs - they're my favourite style to brew. I recommend Maris Otter as a base malt and WLP001 yeast - very versatile.

My fave beer is the Mornington Peninsula Brewery IPA and the best Melbourne venues are the Ale House and Gertrude Hotel, but if you are in Sydney, look up the Welcome Hotel in Rozelle - one of the best tap lists in the city. My favourite beer event is the Merri Mashers Case Swap! Oh yeah, and I use Beersmith."

CLUB RESOURCES

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