

Hank Speaks... So Listen

by Hank Bienert

Cerveza Barato Ale from Rufus Jefferson brewery - A PENITENT'S TALE

It was either an undescribed in the PDR reaction to my antihistamine or a sense of guilt, repentance and reflection due to the Lenten season that provoked me to write this confession of multiple transgressions of the unproven yet still widely believed tenets of The Fellowship of the Damned (all of us who answer to praising/damning description of homebrewer).

A few weeks ago I decided to clean up and came across a brewing pouch, an apparatus made by BrewKing. The heavy plastic bag contained LME and as part of the wall a small plastic container holding yeast and at the bottom a spigot. Since the company is no longer in business to counsel me, I assumed the bag was to be filled with water and then the yeast device popped to activate and the spigot at the bottom used to drain the beer when appropriate.

The back story is that a friend had been gifted it about 2003 and never used and after he left his Katrina damaged home in 2005 stored it in his new garage until he gave it to me in late 2012 so it was old*.

Upon olfactory inspection, the LME smelled clean so I decided to use it in a mini-mash with some grains I had been given for Christmas which had been already milled*. The ale yeast used was a reuse of Wyeast 1450 I had been given by an anonymous CCH member and had used before and now I proposed asking those little saccharomyces to labor for the fifth time*.

After the usual fermentation/cold clearing maneuvers I found myself with a beer that was clean but with a hyper-malty, almost prune juice like flavor.

Figuring there are few lost souls and are fewer lost beers (still on a religious theme) I felt that I could redeem this wayward creation by blending it with the an alcoholic, beer like drink with little malt backbone. Budweiser in bottles is the cheapest "beer" I could find and so I did a half/half mix*.

RESULTS - I like it and four experienced palates including my London based, ale loving daughter pronounce it "outstanding" and " worth 2 bux a bottle"!! Unfortunately requests to "brew it again" cannot be honored.

* = my transgressions but are they? Let's look at it - **THOU SHALT NOT USE OLD STUFF** covers the first three:

- 1) LME changes in flavor but as long as not moldy can give a unique flavor.
- 2) Briess who sell malt as a business is on record that properly stored milled grain has almost as long a life as unmilled but always taste before using.
- 3) Wyeast has a nice article on their web site about top cropping and other harvesting techniques and surprisingly for a company that sells yeast allows usage of up to 10 generations is possible. They do not mention the use of stirplates and taste testing the starter but do this. I like to reuse yeast having noted as many others report that experienced yeast are stronger. It is not a money saver but just a fun approach to our hobby.

THOU MUST EXPEND MUCH TO REACH THE GOAL

4) The observant will note how little I spent to make "one of the best beers"- creativity can triumph over just buying things. If all we wanted to do was buy things we would just buy beer, wouldn't we?

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About the brewery name:

There is an old joke that if one were to be a performer in a porn film, you should choose your screen moniker from the name of your first pet and the street you lived on at the time . . . I will now pause to let you derive what you would be called and to chuckle at the results.

FWIW, my buddies from the St Claude part of town have already claimed Pixie Parger Pale and Duchess St Roch Red Ale.

-- About the style name "Cerveza Barato" is Spanish for . . . well, look it up.

THNX

Hank