

# Hank Speaks

by Hank Bienert

Being in the first generation in my Mother's family line to speak English as a primary language makes me pretty much a Cajun and therefore part alligator which explains why I have written nothing for the Hopline preferring to spend the summer immersed in water. The onset of cooler evenings and the request of our lovely and talented Hopline editor, Monk precipitated this article...When Monk asks something of you and you look at his gentle, almost human, face it's a tossup as to whether you scratch him behind the ears or do as he wishes (write something in my case). I felt avoiding touching any part of him the wiser decision.

Continuing this thread of our heritage brings me to a series of observations about south Louisiana:

--Surrounded by gators and mud dwelling insects (crawfish)-make them a gourmet dish!

--Burdened by repressive religious dogma-change the most somber season -Lent- into something to look forward to by celebrating on a world class level so that the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is better than in any other American city!

--Need a mascot for a swampy state - forget "Mighty Mosquitos" and remember that group of wild Irish and German longshoreman who, when they weren't fighting the Yankees, were fighting each other and who wore those distinctive striped trousers and called themselves the Tigers!

---Need some distinctive colors for that team-Green for the trees and gray for the moss?? Non, cher-run down to New Orleans and buy left over Purple/Gold Mardi Gras bunting- does any other college team have those colors?!!

And the common thread in all of this is called **STYLE**-a unique, pleasing presentation that makes others wonder "why didn't I think of that?"

Bring this "strive for style" to your recipe design. When I first started brewing, I sought out recipes for an ale and then for a clone of a favorite beer. Clones are nearly impossible to produce. Brewing Network's show called *Can you brew it?*

(<http://thebrewingnetwork.com/shows/The-Jamil-Show>) pretends to clone beers but I doubt the reported results since there are so many variables. A brewmeister friend in WA told me that a few years ago before a major craft brewers convention a number of small breweries were asked to produce a beer using the same recipe/yeast and the results were close but each was different; too many variables.

I once owned nearly 30 brewing books but have ditched almost all. Saving John Palmer's *How To Brew* and *Designing Great Beers* by Daniels. This latter is something to browse this winter while sitting by the fire with a stout (but don't let her hear you call her that). It might be a good Christmas present for you to be given-act surprised. Daniels breaks down the variety of ingredients used in award winning brews and one can see how the possibilities in any style of prize products are so varied.

Go beyond DGB and use special ingredients/techniques to create your **STYLE**.

He mentions toasting your own grains to produce different Lovibond levels-be advised that his temperature/time combinations work on his oven not the same as your oven and that his pre-roasted grains will be a different age/water content than yours so don't think you can just follow his numbers and get an exact product.

Here's info on roasting grain (your temps/time WILL be different)

- For Pale Gold Malt (est. 10 L), which has a nutty but not toasty flavor, roast your base malt for 20 minutes at 250 Degrees F.
- For Gold Malt (est. 20 L) that is malty, caramelly and rich but not toasty roast your base malt for 25 minutes at 300 degrees F.
- For Amber Malt (est. 35 L) that is Nutty, Malty, and lightly toasty roast your base malt for 30 minutes at 350 degrees F.
- For Deep Amber Malt (est. 65 L) that is nutty, toffee-like; with some crisp toastiness roast your base malt for 40 minutes at 375 degrees F.
- For Copper Malt (est. 100 L) that has a strong toasted flavor with some nutlike notes roast your base malt for 30 minutes at 400 degrees F.
- For Deep Copper Malt (est. 125 L) that has a roasted, but not toasted flavor; roast your base malt for 40 minutes at 400 degrees F.
- For Brown Malt (est. 175 L) that has a strong roasted flavor, roast your base malt for 50 minutes at 400 degrees F.
- For Crystal/Caramel Malt soak 1-2 lbs. of pale 2 row in just enough water to cover plus about an inch (make sure you use distilled, filtered tap, or spring water). Let soak for a few hours, but no less than 2 hours and no more than 24, I soak for 3 hours. Then Put grains into a pan and keep grains about 2" deep then place into a preheated 180 degree oven (make sure you have a probe thermometer in the oven and not to let the temps inside the stewing grain to go above 160. If they do reduce your oven's temperature) for 1 1/2 hours. Then spread out grain into 2 separate pans and make sure the grains are no more than 1" deep. Then increase temperature in oven to 250 and let bake for 2 hours or until dry. Then if desired remove from oven for light crystal, or use the roasting guide above to create your own darker versions of crystal malt. Personally I like the 350 degrees for 45 minutes for a sweet, roasty, crystal malt. Experiment with 1lb batches and see what you like. I find that 1.5lbs is perfect, 2lbs seems to take way too long to dry.

Use oatmeal that has been slightly toasted in your brown ales/porters. I find that if you taste the oatmeal beginning 15 minutes after you can smell it in the kitchen you will be close to the flavor it will give your beer and that is true for roasting barley. Don't roast wheat unless you want a burnt toast flavor.

Use lots of finishing hops that have definite flavors post whirlpooling.

Ferment at unusual temperatures but strive to keep the temp constant-a beer that fluctuates between 60 and 75 is not the same as one set on 68. My "single yeast for a desert island" is Nottingham dry, named according to the maker not for beer made in that town but because it was felt "Nottingham" sounded authentic. Once I made a double batch and fermented each X 2 weeks - one kept at 68 and the other at 52 and produced 2 markedly different brews.

If an all grain brewer, take a gallon of first runnings and boil it down to a quart, shortly before flame out add 2 quarts of water and return it to the main boil and see if it gives a maltier beer.

Mixing yeast will usually result in a dominant strain winning out so this is unlikely to be beneficial.

But by all means, take accurate notes and keep them as you develop your **STYLE**. If my ancestor Alphonse Guedry had only done that when he was working on nuclear fission in his outhouse along Bayou Lafourche, he would have gotten the credit that frizzy haired pretender

Albert Einstein stole from him, family lore is that he frequently went into the outhouse with the Sears Roebuck catalog (back then Sears used to sell everything including houses .. must've sold nuclear reactor parts) ...he used up all the pages of 2 catalogs every year in his research..... and after a while there was a lot of noise and noxious fumes and the cows that grazed near the privy would run away and in time he would exit saying in his broken English, he was "in dere t'inking about fission" ..makes sense to me.

As always, the reader is invited to direct to the Hopline any written comments, polite disagreements or original articles. Any impolite written comments should be placed "where the sun doesn't shine" which is in the lower level of the aforementioned outhouse along Bayou Lafourche. For those who are too limited to write but wish to make impolite comments, please continue to speak at the meetings

--

THNX

Hank