



Cleaning the Big Bottle

By Michael Heniff Brew Your Own Jan/Feb 2005

Kegs make homebrewing easy. But, what if your new "Corny" keg is also a cruddy keg? How to maintain and recondition the "big bottle."

Used soda kegs (also called Cornelius kegs or "Corny" kegs, named after one of the keg manufacturers) are a great way to enjoy great homebrew without most of the manual labor of bottling. But, kegging your beer is not foolproof. To avoid time-saving kegging from turning into heartbreaking contaminated beer, proper cleaning and sanitizing is necessary. Also, a little regular keg maintenance is required to keep them in tip-top shape. But, this little amount of extra work for maintaining your kegs still makes kegging the easy choice over the labors of bottling your homebrew.

Buying a Keg

Kegs are widely available at most local and Internet homebrew shops. Checking out your local Pepsi or Coca Cola bottling company may land you a few

(Continued on page 3) Next Meeting: October 15th

Next Meeting: November 16th
Location: Bencomo's Homebrew Supply
234 West Olive Ave
Fresno, CA 93728

Schedule:

- 10:00 Brewing Demo
- 12:00 Club Business— Elections
- 12:30 Style Lecture— Munich Dunkel (Category 4B)
- 1:00 Discussion— Temp Control
- 1:30 Open Taps

Please bring a side dish to share at the potluck and some homebrew or some nice commercial brew to share with the other beer lovers.

President

Sean Wood

Exec Vice President

Matt Humann

Asst. Vice President

Sean Railing

Secretary

Aaron Collier

Treasurer

Chris Steinkraus

Sergeant of Arms

Adam Steinkraus

Webmaster

Chris Steinkraus

Hogtoberfest

.Hogtoberfest was a huge success this year! Great BBQ thanks to Chad Snyder, good beer from the club and some great tunes! Big congratulations to Matt Humann for Best of Show at the Fresno Fair and to The Worthog of the Year, Chris Steinkraus! What did you think of the cool tasting glasses? Can't wait for next year!



(Continued from page 1)

cheap kegs as well. When buying a keg, you will pay a premium for a refurbished keg and a super-premium for a brand new keg; both options have the advantage that they will most likely be ready to use without any additional effort. Used kegs that have not been refurbished will take a little initial maintenance, but are easily the best deal.

Coke or Pepsi, Pin Lock or Ball Lock

Corny kegs exist in two main styles, referring to the type of inlet and outlet connections on each type of keg: pin lock and ball lock. Pin lock kegs are ones that are used by Coca Cola and are easily identified by the “pins” on the gas and liquid posts on the keg. Ball lock kegs are identified by the absence of pins on the gas and liquid posts and are used by the other soda companies. The “ball” name is derived is from the ball bearings on the connectors that hold the connectors onto their respective posts.

The advantages of one style of keg over the other are minimal and most homebrewers choose by their personal preference. Ball lock fittings and gadgets seem to be more readily available than those for pin lock kegs. Also, ball lock kegs are easily disassembled using regular sockets and wrenches — a special notched socket is needed to disassemble a pin lock keg. Pin lock kegs are slightly shorter than ball lock kegs which makes them more likely to fit in tight refrigerators. Regardless of which style of keg you choose, the parts for each type of keg are not interchangeable, thus a pin lock keg cannot be converted to a ball lock keg and vice versa.

The connections and tools required vary by each manufacturer. For a pin lock keg, a 13/16” deep socket with special notches is needed (check your local or internet homebrew store or make one yourself). The gas/IN post is the one with two pins while the beer/OUT post has three pins. For a ball lock keg, a combination wrench or deep socket will work for disassembly, in either 7/8” or 11/16” size depending on the keg manufacturer. The gas/IN post has notches on the hex base and can have either a 6 point or 12 point base. (Be sure to buy tools in the 12 point style, so that they will work on both types of fittings.) The beer/OUT post has no notches along the 6 point hex base.

Refurbishing an Old Soda Keg

When you get that old keg home, the first thing to do is take it completely apart. Before disassembling, depressurize the keg by pulling on the lever or ring of the relief valve on the lid (or by depressing the poppet on the gas post). Once the keg is depressurized, pull the lid lever and remove the lid by pushing it into the keg then twisting it out.

For each of the connection posts, use either a wrench or deep socket for removal. Use a small screwdriver to press the poppets out of each post. Pull each diptube from the keg. Remove all five o-rings from the diptubes, posts, and lid and discard them.

Rinse all parts and the inside of the keg with water and scrub any rust spots with a Scotchbrite pad. (Do not use steel wool or brushes; they will leave carbon steel deposits that will rust!). Replace each of the old o-rings with new o-rings. Before using the new o-rings, however, boil them in water for 5 minutes to remove the rubbery, solvent-tasting flavor.

Reassemble the keg in opposite order of disassembly. Install the long diptube on the OUT side, matched with the proper 3 pin or un-notched post on top. The diptube should fit just above the indentation or well in the bottom of the keg. When reassembling the posts, be sure that the poppets are firmly in their posts — or at least secure enough that they don’t fall between the posts and the diptubes — while tightening. This will help you avoid damaging the feet of the poppets. When properly installed, the posts need little effort to tighten completely down.

In some kegs, the long beer dip tube does not have a notch to hold it in place. As such, it may spin while you are tightening the post. Be sure to hold the diptube in place while tightening so that the diptube is not jammed up on one side of the keg. The small diptube for the IN side installs similarly, but goes on the notched or two pin post. Finally, place the lid inside the keg and pull down on the lever making sure that the lid is seated directly in the middle of the lid opening and is not shifted to one side.

After complete reassembly, pressurize with CO2 to 25

(Continued on page 5)

Become a BJCP Judge



White Labs

Turn in your used White Labs Vials at the next Meeting...when we get 5000 vials Chris White will brew with us! Every meeting we get closer...



Ever wanted to know more about beer, be a better brewer, and help out other brewers? Then becoming a BJCP Judge is for you. Check on the BJCP website at <http://www.bjcp.org/>. The first step is to download the study materials, study and take the online **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**. Once you pass the exam you will need to take the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** in the next twelve months. If we have at least 8 people pass the entrance exam Tom Pope can facilitate the Judging Exam!

Bencomo's Homebrew Supplies

Bencomo's Homebrew Shop was started in 1991 in Mike's Liquors on north Palm Ave. Julian Bencomo has been brewing since 1988, is a nationally recognized beer judge, and has won numerous awards for his

beers. The shop is located on the northeast corner of Olive and Arthur between Palm and Fruit at . Hours of operation are M-F 10-4; Sat. 9-5 we also take appointments after hours and on Sundays. Bencomo's is a full service shop with great selection of grains, hops, yeasts, extracts and equipment. Homebrewing advice is always just a phone call away. Phone 559-486-3227

Address: 234 W Olive Fresno



(Continued from page 3)

PSI and check for leaks. Any bad leaks will be heard by the gas hissing out of the fittings. Using a strong iodophor and water mixture, spread over all tightened surfaces including beneath the posts, around the lid and relief valve, and on top of the posts. As an alternative, use a light soap solution or a commercial leak detector solution. For leaks around the lid or posts, either re-tighten the post or lid — or depressurize the keg, remove the leaking fitting, and reinstall it. For leaks around the poppets, reseal by pressing the poppet down with a firm object until the leak stops. Once all leaks are stopped, leave the keg pressurized for a day or two. Check the pressure with a pressure gauge or simply try to apply CO₂ at 25 PSI. If there still is a small leak, determine the leaking part and repair or replace.

Maintaining the Keg

Once your keg is in good shape, it is quite easy to maintain. Each time you disassemble the keg for thorough cleaning, inspect each of the parts. Replace any o-rings that are cut or dry-rotted to be sure that a proper seal can be maintained.

If, when assembling the keg, one of the posts will not hold a seal where the poppet seals against the post, first be sure that the post is properly tightened. If the poppet still won't seal, attempt to reseal the poppet by pressing the poppet down with a screwdriver or other firm object. Use a paper towel to protect yourself from the spray if there is liquid in the keg. If it still won't seal, then it's time to change that poppet. (It's likely the rubber o-ring at the head of the poppet is damaged, one of the feet are damaged, or the spring has worn to the point that it will not expand enough). Many homebrew shops carry a range of poppets for each of the different keg manufacturers. Be sure to check the manufacturer of the keg so that you can choose the proper poppet. Alternately, bring the old poppet with you for comparison when you get your new one.

During use, sometimes it can be increasingly difficult to fit one of the connectors onto the post. When this happens, be sure you are using the proper connector for the post. If it is still difficult (or even impossible) to fit the connector over the post, wet the o-ring with water or apply a tiny amount of Keg Lube or other lu-

bricant meant for beer fittings. The o-ring on the outside of the post may need to be changed if it is damaged or dry-rotted. If a new o-ring doesn't solve the problem, then the post or connector is damaged and will need to be replaced. Be sure to check the manufacturer of the keg so that you can choose the proper post and poppet combination.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleaning and sanitizing a well maintained keg is critical to protect the beer from contamination, which can cause a myriad of off-flavors. Performing a cleaning step each time before sanitizing is highly recommended. However, periodic cleaning is usually all that is necessary.

To clean the keg, completely disassemble it and soak in a cleaning solution. Five Star PBW is a popular choice amongst homebrewers and works well. After filling the keg with cleaning solution, use the keg to hold all of the other parts including the o-rings. After cleaning, be sure to rinse the keg and all parts well. The keg can be cleaned while assembled, but it is not recommended since cleaners are generally hard to rinse and large yeast or hop deposits can get trapped in the springs of the poppets and can be difficult or impossible to clean without disassembling the posts.

After cleaning, sanitize the keg using a good, no-rinse sanitizer such as Iodophor or Star-san. This can be done while the keg is unassembled or assembled. To sanitize unassembled, just soak each part in the sanitizer in the keg just as was done for cleaning. For sanitizing assembled, assemble the keg, fill with sanitizing solution, and soak. Be sure to press down on each poppet after filling the keg with solution so that each dip tube will release the trapped air and fill with sanitizing solution. If you sanitized the keg assembled, top off the keg if necessary, fit the lid, and push the sanitizing solution out with CO₂. The keg is now full of CO₂, with little or no oxygen present, and ready to be filled with homebrew.



CLUB DONATION TO HOUSE OF PENDRAGON: We will be collecting pledges at the November meeting to fund a club donation for the House of Pendragon Taproom Kickstarter Campaign.

For \$25 you will get:

- House of Pendragon Pint Glass
- Participate in a brew day (date to be determined) at the House of Pendragon Brewery
- entered into a raffle to win House of Pendragon Merchandise

Pledges will be used to help fund the House of Pendragon Taproom Kickstarter Campaign. We encourage you to pledge on your own at KICKSTARTER. The link is <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/356710206/house-of-pendragon-brewing-co-taproom-project>

Let's help a fellow Worthog make a dream come true!



2014 "Worthog of the Year"

Official Rules

Worthog of the Year" (also known as WotY) is an honor bestowed upon an individual who brews the best beers through a single year. To honor this member, a trophy is given to the highest scoring Worthogs to highlight their outstanding brewing skills. Please read below for official rules.

Official Rules

1. Only actively paid members may participate in the competition.
2. The competition consists of brewing 4 different styles of beer between the dates October 31st and the September general meeting.
3. Each contestant must register their beers at <http://sjworthogs.org/woty>
4. Competition entries will **only** be accepted at the general meeting listed below **no later than 12:30 pm**. Beers will be inventoried by the current acting Executive Vice President or any person on the board who will not be participating in the judging.
5. All entries must be submitted in two - 12 oz. or higher bottles with the competitors name clearly printed on them. You may also use the bottle ID generated for you when registering your beer at <http://sjworthogs.org/woty>. Any bottle that does not specify a first and last name will be disqualified.
6. Each candidate may only enter in one beer per style.
7. All entries will be judged by two or more judges based on BJCP guidelines using the official BJCP score sheet (http://www.bjcp.org/docs/SCP_BeerScoreSheet.pdf). Entries that are out of style will be disqualified.
8. Depending on the number of judges, scores will be averaged between the score sheets to determine the value for that particular entry. For example; judge one gives 40 points and judge two gives 42 points. Your official score value for that competition will be 41. The participant with the highest cumulative amount of points at the end of all four competitions will be awarded WotY.
9. The styles for 2014 and their due dates are as follows:
 - a. **Mild Ale (Category 11A)** will be due at the **January** general meeting.
 - b. **Belgian Dubbel (Category 18A)** will be due the **March** general meeting.
 - c. **Cream Ale (Category 6A)** will be due at the **June** general meeting.
 - d. **Oktoberfest/Marzen (Category 3B)** will be due at the **September** general meeting.
10. The Worthog of the Year winner will be awarded the trophy at the annual Hogtoberfest event.

May the best Worthog win!



The San Joaquin Worthog's Holiday Beer Exchange

When- December 14th 2013 at the December Worthog Meeting

How it works

- You bring a six pack of beer, mead or cider!
- You exchange your six pack with someone else!
- You get new beer to try for the holidays!
- Everyone wins!

Specifics

- Pick out your six pack to exchange
 - Use your own homebrew or a commercial beer. Mix it up!
 - Be creative with labels, six pack holders and decorating –have fun!
 - Include your recipes if you want
 - Include extras like stickers, shirts, glasses, gift cards, bottle openers, an extra bomber, etc... Make it a unique sixer!
- Place all in a paper grocery bag or wrap it up-be sure it's sealed so no one can peak. Folding and stapling the paper bag should work the best.
- Bring your wrapped six pack to the December meeting
- Feel free to bring more than one sixer and you can exchange for the same amount you
- brought

RECAP:

Bring Beer to December Meeting —> Exchange for more beer —> Drink Beer