

## National Homebrew Conference 2011

If you don't know by now, NHC 2011 has come and gone. We were lucky enough this year to have it in our back yard.

If you went, I am sure you have stories to tell, if you didn't go, you certainly missed out on a great time to taste, learn and have fun all related to beer and mead.

Some of the lecture topics included Cooking with beer with Sean Paxton, Simple to advanced mead making with Ken Schramm, Choosing the right yeast with Chris White, Recipe building and competition tips from Gordon Strong, Smoked beers from Geoff Larson and many more.

The pro brewers night is one for the ages with many of our favorite breweries there with a lot of the faces we associate with the breweries like Matt Brynildson of Firestone Walker, Vinnie Cilurzo of Russian River,

Greg Koch of Stone, Geoff Larson of Alaskan Brewing and even Jamil Zainasheff of the new Heretic Brewing.

If being at the conference was not enough, there were so many breweries within a short drive that weeks could have been spent visiting them all.

The conference wasn't all about beer either, the final evening a dinner was setup by Sean Paxton and paired with Rogue beers to create a flavor explosion that will not be forgotten.

If this sounds interesting, don't worry they do this every year. Next year will be in Bellevue right next to Seattle. We have another west coast stop for NHC in another beer capital of the states, so get your tickets early as they are bound to go quickly.

[www.brewingwithbigfoot.com/](http://www.brewingwithbigfoot.com/)

**Next Meeting: May 21st, 2011**  
**Location: Matt Humann**  
**1604 E Escalon Ave**  
**Fresno, CA 93710**

**Schedule:**

12:00 Club Business

12:30 Style Lecture—Sour Ales (17)

01:00 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.

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## Brewing a BIG beer

What do I mean by "BIG beer"? I am referring to a whole lot of sugar, maltose to be more specific. In this brief segment I will give some key things that need to be done in order to have a successful BIG beer.

First of all, you need to get the sugar out, if you are an extract brewer that means a whole lot of it if you are an all grainer, that is a whole lot of grain. If you are not using software to create your recipes that is my first suggestion, no winging in in this area.

If you have been maxing out your capacity in your mash tun with your typical batches you will need to adjust the size of batch you do down since there will be more grain going in. Speaking of the mash, since we are going to be having a high gravity we want to mash at a lower temperature and as you know from a previous article, the lower mash temp will create longer chains of sugar goodness so the yeast will be able to eat more of them thus giving us more attenuation or percentage of sugars eaten so we don't have a cloyingly sweet beer in the

end.

You are going to want to collect more wort than usual to do a longer boil so that you can have a higher gravity by boiling off more. Use your software that you bought in the last 30 seconds to figure out what boil volume you will need for your longer boil.

Here is where the important stuff starts after you have carefully transferred your nice high OG wort into the fermentor, you will need yeast to ferment it right? No, you will need a whole lot of yeast actually. In addition to that you will want to provide your wort with a whole bunch of oxygen, yes I said oxygen, yeast like it at this point and so will you. Keep in mind that the atmosphere only contains about 21% oxygen, so just swishing the fermentor around does not get enough O<sub>2</sub> in without a length I would be worried about introducing foreign items you don't want in your unfermented wort. A yeast start is highly recommended unless you are able to get to pitching cell counts from a yeast cake or know someone who can give you a 1/2 gal-

lon slurry. I would typically step up a starter for the previous week of my brew day, crash cool it and remove the beer, then put cooled wort from brewday on the nice healthy yeast and let it get started for 12-24 hours while the rest of the batch stabilizes at the pitching temperature.

Pitch the yeast when it is ready and active and the temperature of the wort/beer is the most crucial part because a beer like this will generate so much of its own heat and will easily be 10 degrees above ambient temperature at active fermentation. Keep this in mind if you don't have a way to know the temp of the fermenting beer and adjust the ambient accordingly.

Finally, you have done your hard work, now let the beer do its work and give it plenty of time. These beers cannot be rushed and if you have done everything right, they will get better with age. A typical big beer can be in your primary fermentor for months with the modified malts of today that are not going to throw off taboo off flavors.

Make sure to save enough to have years down the road.

## Website of the month: [www.homebrewersassociation.org](http://www.homebrewersassociation.org) A great resource for many things related to homebrewing

Ok, so you should know about this website and if you do not, well here is a gentle push. The site is loaded with resources articles from knowledgeable beer writers most of which write for Zymurgy magazine which is one of the benefits of joining the American Homebrewers Association.

There is a forum section where you can get the toughest of questions answered and listing of AHA related events that are happening including all the AHA competitions that are coming up.

## Feel like sharing something?

Do you have something that would be worth sharing with your fellow Hogs? Please feel free to submit a review of a beer, brewpub, or event. Have a recipe that you would like to share? We would love to publish it. Have a question about a technique, ingredient, style, etc? Let me know, and we can try to answer it, and share the information with the rest of the club.

[Matt Humann, VP News](#)

## May Meeting Recap



The May Meeting was held at Keith and Janets house, thank you for opening your home to us. We sampled Saisons including great examples by Dupont, Lost Abbey and even one from Donald Thornton. A great learning experience on a style that is not tasted very often by most beer drinkers.

As always there were terrific beers to sample and food to sample as well. Even Ron Henslee brought some sample beers from a new upstart brewery from Madera for everyone to try.





The 2011 National Homebrewers Conference was in place of the June meeting.

Fun times were had by over 2000 beer fans and highlights included Probrewers night where you could sample classic beers you have always had or try something new and crazy such as a curry stout or habanero IPA.



Club night was great and the Worthogs represented with some really fine beer and was received very well by the crowd. Thanks to everyone who lent their beer for the cause. The new tap tower made by Dave Chappell worked great as well. Thanks Dave for your hard work.

The final night included an exquisite dinner prepared by Sean Paxton and paired with Rogue beers.



## Upcoming Events



Source : [Homebrewers association](http://www.homebrewersassociation.org)

America's Finest Beer Festival ( <http://www.afbfest.com> ) July 22-24

National Mead day ( <http://www.homebrewersassociation.org/pages/events/mead-day> ) August 6th

Mammoth Festival of Beers and Bluespalooza in Mammoth ( <http://www.mammothbluesbrewsfest.com/> ) August 5-7

Stone 15th Anniversary ( <http://www.stonebrew.com/anniv/> ) August 19th

Blues, Brews and BBQ ( <http://napadowntown.com/bbandbbq.html> ) August 27th

Sierra Brewfest ( <http://www.musicinthemountains.org/brewfest.php> ) August 27th

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## Lost Abbey/Port Brewing in San Marcos (San Diego)



If you ever find yourself in San Diego county looking for a good place to stop for beer, you will most likely already know of Lost Abbey and Port Brewing.

This is essentially 2 breweries in one giving a very wide range of beer styles from Lagers, dark roasty Imperial stout, hop bombs and then you have a whole side of Belgian influenced beers which are wonderful.

Since a ordinance where an establishment like this cannot have bar stools is in place in San Diego County, a solution of sitting on sacks of sugar on top of kegs was thought of and works

quite well as a substitute.

So if you find yourself down south and feel like tasting some truly inspiring beers, make your way to Lost Abbey and Port Brewing, you will not be disappointed.

Don't forget to take some bottles home too!

