

Brew in 2017: Belgian Raspberry Saison

picture below (wort after mashing finished, continually recirculated):



4/9/2017:

Today we have brewed a Belgian Saison - using the [Wheast 3724 strain](#). If you read about this strain's feedback and requirements from the manufacturer and other people's experiences, you will quickly realize that **this is not** a beginner strain. If you are starting out and lack precise heating control in your fermenting environment (or some heat control), then you perhaps should go with a different strain, like the Wheast 3711 or perhaps offerings from other vendors like, White Labs., but check the requirements and do a little

research for which ever yeast you decide to go with.

The temperature range for this strain is between 75 ~ 95F, it is a high attenuator 75-80% / which will give you that dry classic Saison profile beer. The grain profile for this brew was more complex than for the French Saison. We used regional hops from England.



For precise heat control management and data capture for later analysis, we of course use the Beeruino, it logs all the variables we need and allows us to monitor and tweak the temperature as the yeast gives you feedback on what to do.

We will post more details later including the exact recipe and final details on ABV.

The starting OG was 1.044 on this beer (11 gallons) and we take samples (gravity reading,

date) over time as it ferments and quickly transform that into a plot using R to show what is going on.

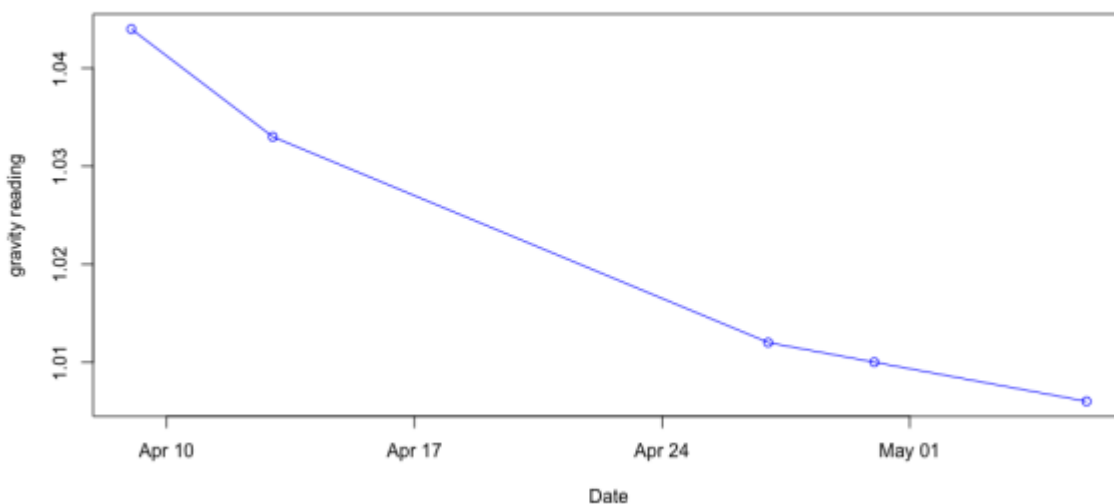


R

```
OG <- as.numeric(c('1.044', '1.033', '1.012', '1.010', '1.006'))  
class(OG)
```

```
1 OG <- as.numeric(c('1.044','1.033','1.012','1.010','1.006'))  
2 class(OG)  
3  
4 DATE <- as.Date(c("04/09/17","04/13/17","04/27/17","04/30/17","05/06/17"), "%m/%d/%y")  
5 class(DATE)  
6  
7 observations <- as.data.frame(OG)  
8 observations$DATE <- as.data.frame(DATE)  
9  
10summary(observations)  
11  
12with (observations, plot(DATE, OG, type="o", col="blue", ylab="gravity reading", xlab="Date") )
```

the resulting R plot (using simple x over y axis)...



If you don't know what R is and want to learn:

<https://www.r-bloggers.com/start-here-to-learn-r/>

On the 4th week we added 2lb of frozen raspberries / and waited a week extra.



Video before shows how I blend frozen raspberries. Total volume added was 3/4 of a gallon - I mix warm water with frozen raspberries, otherwise its difficult to get them blended.

On Friday 5/12/2017 the heat was turned down to 78F and I let the temperature fall so that everything settled to the bottom of the fermentor. You can ferment longer after the

addition of the raspberries to let things integrate longer, maybe 3 weeks total after fruit addition.

Here is how the color looks before and after / also for testing purposes its always a good idea to leave some of the original beer before fruit was added to see how they compare.

left = before adding fruit

right = after addition of fruit



This yeast likes heat!

Make no mistake about it, this yeast like heat right from the start, 80F minimum is perfectly

" a ok " even as soon as you pitch. Some people like to gradually raise it by a degree per day or so, but I think that this is totally unnecessary.

Most other strains when fermenting at these temperatures would result in a beer that tasted like a combination of gasoline and nail polish remover, seriously, so for this reason a lot of people naturally are wary of starting at higher temperatures. Be warned that if you start with a warmer starter, and pitch into a cooler wort say 68F / this yeast can stall right away and you might not even see fermentation - which probably will freak you out. As that's exactly what happened the 1st time we did this, simply raise your temps to 75, then 80, then 85, 5F per day and let it sit there. Agitate your fermentor if you can once in a while.

Stalling - did I say already that this yeast is notorious for stalling ? It doesn't matter if you are an experienced brewer, it has a mind of its own, it will stall, maybe on your first try or 5th try. Also - this yeast can be slow - so a lot of people will confuse that with stalling, but it just takes time.

This strain will most likely stall around 1.035, for us it was 1.033, just ramp up the temp and take a vacation, you will have to wait a few weeks.

Make a big starter - for this brew we only made a 1000ml starter, but bigger is better with this strain of yeast, next time we will do 2000ml starter at bare minimum.

This yeast *may* be pressure sensitive.

Some research indicates that this yeast could also be stalling because of the pressure created inside the fermentor from co2 gas, and therefore some people open ferment, maybe put some aluminum foil over the exhaust.

What we actually did was use an air lock, because not a lot of pressure is needed to move the air lock up, but more is needed to overcome the water resistance enacting over the fermentor when the blow-off tube is sitting in a container full of water.

But think about it, maybe that's really what an exciting brew is all about, brewing becomes a little bit boring after a while, if everything comes out like clock work " as to be expected " and there is no element of mystery, what is going on in there, hello yeast, knock knock, anyone there ?

This Saison will reward you with a wonderful complex peppery-fruity flavor, people will be breathing down your neck, they will beg!!

The ABV can range anywhere between 5 ~ 7.5%, it all depends on your recipe and what you are looking for.

Detailed observations to come, stay tuned!!!

Grains used:

- 22 lbs - German Pilsner
- 1 lb - Vienna
- 1/2 lb - Munich
- 1 lb - Caramunich
- 1 lb - Wheat

Hops:

- 2 ounce at start of boil - East Kent
- 1 ounce at 5 minutes to flame off - Styrian Hops

Yeast:

- Wyeat 3724 1000ml starter

Cost:

The more complex the grain bill is, the more it will cost (specialty grains cost more per pound compared to base 2-row grain) - for all ingredients (grain, hops, yeast, raspberries), total was \$72 with tax - this brewed 11 gallons, which means that we average about \$6.50 per 1 gallon of awesome, fantastic beer. Tell me where you can go and buy a gallon of Belgian Saison with Raspberry for \$8 bucks (no where), most breweries sell Belgian by a small glass and that cost \$8/\$12 per glass, forget buying a growler to take home or a gallon.

The biggest cost was the German Pilsner, at \$1.79 per pound.

Here is how it looks at only 1 week out of the fermentor with a quick cold crash in the fridge - (tart, dry and a good hint of fruit), very drinkable, now we age and see how it transforms and refines over time.



In conclusion - if you want a stronger/sharper raspberry flavor, remove beer about a week after addition of the fruit from the fermentor, however; if you want it more smooth and less fruity, let it ferment longer 3 weeks up to a month after addition of fruit. You can also have both worlds, by removing half of it and half later from the fermentor, and also save some without fruit additions so that you can compare it all.

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Brew in 2015:

7/28/2015 - on Sunday we are brewing a slightly different variation this year. 80% Pilsner, 10% Vienna, 10% Wheat. Columbus for bittering and Saaz for Aroma hops // using French Saison Yeast #3711 by Wyeast. In addition we will use Raspberries during secondary conditioning for a - French Raspberry Saison... Also we will shoot for at least a Double, so approx. 9% ABV+. The colour we are looking for is a farmhouse straw!

The two pics below were a test pour out of the Fermentor at 2 weeks, the classic straw Farmhouse Ale colour was spot on. The beer tasted awesome as well, only will get much better with time.



Raspberries also come through the best in beers for the flavor, taste and their overall profile. It can turn some beer slightly sour with an unexpected benefit!

OG this time was 1.068... FG was 7 days later (1 week fermentation), for a final of 1.005 - which would put this beer at a approximate 8.30% // not too shabby!

Now to Age // CHEERS!

Here is how the beer looks like at mashout...



and here is how it looks like after 1 week of fermentation with the raspberries added to the fermentor at day 3.





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Brew in 2014

7/20/2014 - we used 12 pounds of grain (per recipe percentage proportions), and 1/2 lb of Belgian Candi sugar (that's all we had left).. OG - 1.049, FG - 1.009

ABV % - 5.25%

Belgian Saison Ale

Historically a Saison is a french style farm beer, brewed in Fall/Winter for the next season - a harvesting/farmer drink. These days many variations exist, and many good articles too - Google for additional research and ask questions if you are not sure about something.

If you want a traditional Saison don't add any spices or orange/lemon peels and use traditional German hops like the Noble or something regional from the French area - since this is a traditional French beer. We also like East Kent (even tho they are from the UK) and Styrian - these add a sweet edge to the beer.

Traditional Sainson's are bottle conditioned and highly carbonated. Color can be Golden to Amber, ABV 3 ~ 5%, modern Sainson can be as high as 6.5%+. Should be moderately hoped to balance out the maltiness for all ABV variations.

Age: 1 ~ 2 months, and up to a year+

60 minute standard mash, some people even do a 90 minute mash

We will post out (OG , FG) and final ABV later.

- 85% lbs domestic Pilsner // we like to use the German Pilsner Malt as substitution.
- 10% Wheat
- 5% Euro Caravienne

Hops / Additional ingredients:

Once you achieve a rolling boil, set timer:

- At start-of-boil add 1.5 oz of Styrian Golding Hops and 1 lb of Light Belgian Candi
- At 45 minute of boil add some Irish Moss - helps with Chill Haze later -
<http://byo.com/stories/item/486-conquer-chill-haze>
- At 5 minutes end-of-boil, add 1 oz of Sweet Orange Peel or lemon peels - depends what you want - (skip peels for a traditional Saison)
- At 2 minutes end-of-boil, add 1 oz of Noble Hops

Yeast:

Wheast #3711 seems highly recommended by other brewers, Wheast #3724 was reported to be slow and a pain-in-the-ass. Yeasts by White Labs was recommended, choose a proper yeast for a true Saison beer.

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