

CHEERS FOR BEER



CHEF JOSEPH STYKE

Put your new homebrewing kit to good use

How many of you got a homebrew kit for Christmas? Yikes! That many?

Here's how I got hooked. In 1978 I had my first homebrew and it was, well, if you mixed it with a Moschehead half and half it was tolerable. Two years later I had one from the same guy, and you could actually drink it like a real beer.

I have been drinking imported beer for 22 years now. I started with a dark Heineken and went "wow! This is great." Then I started working my way through Germany, then England, then Belgium, and then back to a long sojourn in England being fortunate enough to have a store nearby that stocked about 140 beers.

In 1990, one fine Sunday afternoon after work, I was at Chef Frank O'Donnell's house and he said his neighbor Mike made some of the best ale he ever had. By now my palate was pretty good so I told him to bring it on.

Best ale

Mike brought over three pints and proceeded to pour me one outstanding ale. It was everything you could want from an ale, soft at the start with a great maltiness and perfect balance of hops. Mike said he was shooting for a Fullers London Pride, and boy did he come close - humm. Something clicked in my mind, and I filed it away as I finished my pint.

In July of 1995 my best friend Tom Stawarz and I made plans for lunch. Of course the restaurant was closed for the family vacation. Back in the car as we were driving around trying to think of somewhere else to go, Tom looked at me and said, "have you ever thought of making beer?" I replied, "yes," so we drove to the local hardware store and bought two copies of the new complete "Joy of Homebrewing," a plastic fermenter, air lock, racking cane, bottle filler, bag of caps, one pound of dry malt, and a one can kit for brown ale. Armed with a bunch of Hacker - Paschors they, we needed empty bottles, and two pizzas, we set out for Tommy's house with high hopes.

The directions on the can were followed, the Hackers enjoyed, and the pizza was great. Two days into fermentation Tom's air conditioning went down and it was in the 90s in his house for three days. This is not good for the beer. To prime for carbonation, the hardware store man told us to pour 1 teaspoon of dry malt into each bottle then fill and wait two weeks. What he neglected to tell us was that when the bag of powder is opened in a humid house it gets sticky and there is no way you will be able to measure and pour it into a bottle without making a mess. The bottles that did turn out were not too bad, they were way better than the Moschehead mix. We read the book, and I remembered an ad I heard for a place in Livonia called Brew & Grow, and one day we headed over there.

Good advice

Owner Scott Day and Todd Warren were working that day and are two of the most helpful guys there are. They told us to use the plastic bucket for bottling and buy two glass carboys for fermenting and secondary, to use liquid yeast all the time.

Since then we have been buying everything from them and Scott Day has taken over the right hand spot from Todd. The first beer we made from them was an ale, kind like a Fullers. Next was a bitter, then a porter, then a brown ale. We made another ale and an imperial stout. The first contest we entered we won the Stout Category, and second place in Best of Show. The best part was

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Living Better Specially

Stayin' Alive

Award-winning drinks are alcohol free

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Darryl James of Southfield, who considers himself an amateur bartender, recently had a chance to mix up a drink for a panel of judges - and won \$500 and a "Golden Stirrer" plaque for his efforts.

This was a nice change for a man who had previously only tested his drinks on his wife and friends. "She's my guinea pig," James said of his wife, Cindra. "If I mix (a drink) up and she doesn't like it, that's as far as it goes."

He was one of the top four mixers in a AAA-Michigan sponsored non-alcoholic drink contest. His award-winning martini-style tropical drink was dubbed the "Panama Special," so named for the Panama Canal treaty signed in 1978. This year's contest theme was "Remember '78."

One of James' past drink inventions is called "Cindra's Starburst Martini," named for his wife. The drink is garnished with a star-shaped cucumber slice. Unlike "The Panama Special," however, this one has alcohol.

What makes his "Panama" drink special, at least according to one judge, that unless one knows it's "virgin," it could easily pass as alcoholic because of how it's served and because of the tartness from lime juice and non-alcoholic triple sec. "That is key to keeping some partygoers comfortable, particularly at parties where alcohol is

served," James said. Non-drinkers and designated drivers like to drink festive-looking drinks that "look" alcoholic. Because James' drink is prepared with traditional mixers and bartending tools, and is served in a martini glass, it fits the bill, he said.

"People are more comfortable with a drink in their hand," he said.

James works as a business development manager for a construction company. Now his co-workers are eager to try a sampling of his \$500 drink, he said.

James, who has lived in Southfield for about 25 years, said he hasn't decided what to do on New Year's yet, but it likely will be something that won't involve driving.

"The older I get, the more good it seems to stay in (for New Year's)," he said.

Finalist Donna Affeldt of Rochester Hills put her ice cream parlor roots to work when concocting a drink, which won her \$500.

Affeldt works as a dental hygienist and said she decided to enter the contest on a "whim." Her high school and college job at Sander's in downtown Detroit helped her put her mixing skills to good use. Her drink is called the "20/20 Nuts and Berries Hot Fudge Shake," named for the television news show "20/20," which first aired in 1978.

"I used to make all that kind of stuff when I worked at Sander's," Affeldt said of her ice cream drinks. As a high school and college student, Affeldt used to gather with her co-workers after hours to see what kind of concoctions they could make. From this experimentation and her penchant for strawberry sundaes made with butter pecan ice cream, her drink idea was born.

The butter pecan ice cream along with chopped pecans give her drink a "nutty" texture, which makes it especially good, according to Affeldt.

She plans to spend New Year's with immediate family and friends, who have children of similar ages to her own. Early in the evening, they plan to serve non-alcoholic drinks from the AAA recipe book, including her own, but will likely have some alcoholic drink later in the evening.

"(For the children) we're trying to emphasize fun drinks that are non-alcoholic," Affeldt said.

This year's AAA drink guide contains 19 recipes by Michigan residents who were selected as finalists in four regional "Zero-Proof Mix-Off" contests held in October, as well as recipes from professional bartenders.

Contest finalists prepared their drink recipes in front of a panel of judges. Cities in which the regional contests were held included Cadillac, Kalamazoo, Marquette and Sterling Heights. The participants also had to give a little speech about



Nutty drink: Donna Affeldt of Rochester Hills, a regional finalist in the AAA Michigan Zero-Proof Mix-Off contest, adds hot fudge topping to create her "20/20 Nuts and Berries Hot Fudge Shake."

their drinks, explain how they were made and show how they should be served.

The Bee Gees' tune "Stayin' Alive" was popular in 1978 - the same year AAA Michigan launched its "First a Friend, Then a Host" non-alcoholic drink program.

For 20 years, the auto club has provided its "Great Pretenders Party Guide" free to Michigan residents to help make the holidays safer. More than 60,000 copies of the guide are distributed each holiday season through AAA Michigan branches, traffic safety organizations and in response to mail and phone requests.

"Stayin' Alive is one theme we take to heart," said Jerry Basch, community safety services manager for AAA Michigan. "That was our goal in 1978 - to help make the roads safer during the holidays, when people tend to drink and drive. That's still our goal today."

See recipes inside.

Some facts about drunken driving:

- Alcohol was a factor in 37.5 percent of fatal crashes in Michigan in 1997, an increase of 1.1 percentage points from 1996.
- There were 544 persons killed and 13,461 injured in alcohol-related crashes in 1997.
- Drivers age 21 through 44 were involved in 62 percent of the alcohol-related fatal crashes.
- The annual cost of alcohol-related crashes in Michigan is \$2.75 billion.
- Out of 10,000 Michigan residents, 61 were arrested for drinking and driving during 1997.
- The percentage of fatalities in crashes involving drinking is seven times higher than non-drinking crashes.
- The highest proportion of alcohol-related crashes occurred on Saturday and Sunday.
- Of the 658 reported drinking drivers involved in fatal crashes, 536 (81.5 percent) were male and 122 (18.5 percent) were female.
- About 37 people are injured each day in alcohol-related crashes.

-AAA Michigan



Panama Special: Darryl James of Southfield pours a Panama Special, his Golden Stirrer Award winning recipe.

Bring an easy-to-make side dish to the party

BY KEELY WYGONIK
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Holiday cooking and baking is a lot of work, and now that all the presents are unwrapped, it's time to unwind and relax a little. If you're planning to go to a friend or relative's house for New Year's Eve, here are two delicious dishes to pass.

Jennifer J. Peters of Canton shared a Glorified Potatoes recipe, and Linda Hall of West Bloomfield shared her Corn Casserole recipe. "This is one of my favorites because it is very simple to make and it is very delicious," said Peters. "I am often asked to make it for special occasions."

Hallof's Corn Casserole is a recipe she has used over the years for Thanksgiving, but since it's easy to

prepare in advance, it's also a good choice to make if you are invited out and have to bring a side dish. "It transports easily," she said.

Both of the recipes can be made with ingredients you can keep on hand such as frozen hash browns and corn muffin mix.

GLORIFIED POTATOES

- 2 pounds frozen hash brown potato
- 1/8 cup diced onion
- 16 ounces sour cream
- 1 can (10 1/4 ounces) cream of chicken soup
- 1 stick butter
- 8 ounces grated Sharp Cheddar Cheese
- 1 cup corn flake crumbs

Thaw potatoes. Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix all ingredients together except for corn flake crumbs.

Place ingredients in a 9- by 13-inch glass dish.

Bake at 375°F for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle corn flake crumbs over entire top. Bake an additional 30 minutes.

Recipe compliments of Jennifer J. Peters.

CORN CASSEROLE

- 1 can (13.25 ounces) Freshlike Cream Style Corn
- 1 can (11 ounces) Freshlike Whole Kernel Corn
- 1 stick margarine, melted
- 2 eggs

- 8 ounces sour cream
- 1 (8 1/2 ounce) box corn muffin mix such as Jiffy

Butter a 1 1/2 quart casserole. Mix all ingredients one at a time in casserole. Bake 35-45 minutes at 350°F uncovered. Serves 6.

Recipe compliments of Linda Hall.

The best recipes are ones you share. Send us your favorite recipe, and if it's chosen to be featured in Taste on the fourth Sunday of the month, we'll send you a cookbook along with our thanks. Send recipes for consideration to Keely Wygonik, Taste editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or e-mail kwygonik@homecomm.net