Beer Education Series: Sugar Creek Brewing

About Sugar Creek Brewing:

Sugar Creek Brewing Company is bringing Belgian-inspired beer to the Carolinas and beyond. The Sugar Creek Brewing philosophy combines the watchful eye of a Trappist Monk with the technical precision of a nuclear engineer to craft fresh, full-flavored beers that are immensely satisfying and intensely drinkable. Using unique combinations of aromatic yeast strains, domestic and imported hops and award-winning malt varieties, Sugar Creek infuses traditional recipes with modern tastes and techniques to create beer that nourishes both mind and body.

Belgian style beers are famous for their deep complexity and unique flavors which deliver an unsurpassable drinking experience. The Belgians used ingredients considered taboo by other brewers, such as aged hops, fruit, or spices. Generation after generation, they used and kept the yeast cultures that produced the best flavors, even if that meant more difficultly during the brewing process. This practice of #BreakTheRules in pursuit of something great has created some of the most complex and interesting beers in the world. **Our Mission:** To craft beer and experiences that people will love and share around the world

The Beers We Are Sampling:

1. White Ale [Belgian Witbier, 4.9%, 16 IBUs, BA: *86/100*]: With a recipe that dates back to the 14th Century, this is one of our most traditional craft beers. This beer is an unfiltered Witbier, called a "White Beer" by Flemish-speaking Belgians due to its opaquely white appearance. At 4.9% ABV, it is a refreshing, easy-drinking beer to be enjoyed throughout the year. Its grain bill includes nearly 50% unmalted wheat and oats, and it is lightly spiced with coriander and orange peel. The yeast in this recipe was cultured from the original strain near the town of Hoegaarden in Belgium, and it adds a pleasant fruitiness during fermentation.

BJCP Analysis of Belgian Witbier:

Aroma: Moderate malty sweetness with light, grainy, spicy wheat aromatics, often a bit tart. Moderate perfume-y coriander, with a complex herbal, spicy, or peppery note in the background. Moderate zesty, citrusy-orangey fruitiness.

Appearance: Very pale straw to very light gold in color. The beer will be very cloudy from starch haze and/or yeast, which gives it a milky, whitish-yellow appearance. Dense, white, mousse-y head.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body, a smoothness and light creaminess from unmalted wheat and the occasional oats. Despite body and creaminess, finishes dry and often a bit tart. Effervescent character from high carbonation.

Taste: Pleasant malty-sweet grain flavor and a zesty, orange-citrusy fruitiness. Refreshingly crisp with a dry, often tart, finish. Can have a low bready wheat flavor. Very light lactic-tasting sourness. Herbal-spicy flavors, may include coriander and other spices, should be subtle and balanced. A spicy-earthy hop flavor is low & bitterness is low to medium-low.

2. Pale Ale [Belgian Pal Ale, 5.2%, 40 IBUs, BA: *87/100*]: A multicultural fusion combining American and European styles. This ale, brewed with imported Belgian specialty malts supported by a traditional English floor malt backbone, is hopped with some of America's most popular whole-cone hop varieties yielding a surprisingly refreshing and well-balanced Pale Ale. Pronounced hop-flavors of fruit, citrus, pine and grapefruit balance a caramelized toastiness from our unique malt combination appealing to both hop-heads and malt-lovers alike. Expect a medium-bodied ale with a dry finish that will lend itself to easy drinking any time of year.

BJCP Analysis of Pale Ales:

Aroma: Moderate malt aroma, which can be a combination of toasty, biscuity, or nutty, possibly with a touch of light caramel or honey. Moderate to moderately high fruitiness with an orange- or pear-like character. Low to moderate strength hop character (spicy, herbal, or floral) optionally blended with background level peppery, spicy phenols. The hop character is lower in balance than the malt and fruitiness. Fruity esters vary from moderate to none.

Appearance: Amber to copper in color. Clarity is very good. Creamy, rocky, white head often fades more quickly than other Belgian beers.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-light body. Smooth palate. Alcohol level is restrained, and any warming character should be low if present. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

Taste: An initial soft, smooth, moderately malty flavor with a variable profile of toasty, biscuity, nutty, light caramel and/or honey notes. Moderate to moderately high fruitiness, sometimes orange- or pear-like. Relatively light (medium-low to low) spicy, herbal, or floral hop character. The hop bitterness is medium-high to medium-low, and is optionally enhanced by low to very low amounts of peppery phenols. There is a dry to balanced finish, with hops becoming more pronounced in the aftertaste of those with a drier finish. Fairly well balanced overall, with no single component being high in intensity; malt and fruitiness are more forward initially with a supportive bitterness and drying character coming on late.

***Awards**: Commonwealth Cup SILVER; Brewers Cup GOLD; 2015 Beer Army Championships GOLD*

3. Dubbel [Belgian Dubbel, 7.6%, 22 IBUs, BA: *91/100*]: Complex, mysterious and deceivingly dangerous, our Belgian Dubbel is both easy-drinking and full of character. Inspired by one of our favorite recipes, this craft beer will keep you guessing with a plethora of distinct and delicious flavors: plum, raisin, spice, banana, clove, chocolate, brown sugar, and cherry can all be found in a single tasting! A hint of earthy spiciness with a sweet lingering caramel tone precedes a pleasantly warm alcoholic finish. By far our most expensive beer to create, our Dubbel pushes the limits of our lauter tun's capabilities and delivers a beer worthy of the famed Trappist monasteries that originated the style.

BJCP Analysis of Belgian Dubbel:

Aroma: Complex, rich-sweet malty aroma, possibly with hints of chocolate, caramel and/or toast. Moderate fruity esters (usually including raisins, plums, and dried cherries). Esters sometimes include banana or apple. Spicy phenols and higher alcohols are common (may include light clove and spice, peppery, rose-like and/or perfume-y notes).

Appearance: Dark amber to copper with reddish depth of color. Generally clear. Large, dense, long-lasting, creamy off-white head.

Mouthfeel: Medium-full body. Medium-high carbonation, which can influence the perception of body. Low alcohol warmth.

Taste: Rich, complex medium to medium-full rich-sweet malt flavor on the palate yet finishes moderately dry. Complex malt, ester, alcohol and phenol interplay (raisin flavors are common; dried fruit flavors are welcome; clove or pepper spiciness is optional). Balance is always toward the malt. Medium-low bitterness that doesn't persist into the aftertaste. Low spicy, floral, or herbal hop flavor is optional and not usually present.

***Awards**: 2019 GABF GOLD; 2018 U.S. Open GOLD; 2018 Best of Craft Beer Awards GOLD; 2015 U.S. Open SILVER*

4. Choose 1 WILDCARD for your 4th Ladies Choice Selection!

Thank you for joining Charlotte Beer Babes© for the June 2022 Beer Ed Series at Sugar Creek Brewing!
Check us out on our Facebook Group, Facebook Page, Meetup Page, Instagram, Twitter, and Website! #cltbeerbabes #cltbeer

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Dropping Some Beer Knowledge:

Malts: Base vs Specialty:

- Base Malt: The larger percentage of a grain bill used to make a beer. These malts provide enzymes to convert malt starches into sugars. Provides extra enzymes to convert specialty malts/adjuncts without enough enzymes of their own to convert into sugars. Includes: Pale Malt, Pilsner Malt, Vienna Malt, Munich Malt, Rye Malt, & Wheat Malt. 2-Row vs 6-Row: Differentiates based on the formation of corns on the barley stalk rows.
- Specialty Malt: Smaller percentage of a grain bill used to make a beer. These malts are cracked & steeped to release the sugars and flavor compounds. The color of a beer typically comes more from the Specialty Malts. Includes: Roasted Malts, Chocolate Malt, Crystal/Caramel Malts, Smoked/Peated Malts, Acidulated

Hops – Oils, Acids, and Regions:

- Hop Oils: Main source of flavor and aroma from hops; provide non-bitter tastes/aromas for hops.
    - Myrcene: natural organic compound that is classified as a hydrocarbon. In thyme, bay, parsley, lemongrass, cannabis. Used in the perfume industry.
    - Humulene: named after the scientific name for hops, Humulus lupulus, it's an isomer of Caryophyllene. Key part of hops that gives the "hoppy" aroma. It's been found to possess anti-inflammatory properties, and is being studied.
    - Caryophyllene: one of the oils that help to give black pepper its spiciness. Gives a strong dry wood, pepper, earthy flavor, and an herbal character. This compound has been seen to reduce inflammation & been in anti-cancer studies. Used in the perfume industry.
- Bittering: During longer boil times hop oils evaporate, so they're added at beginning of boil to impart bitterness.
- Aroma: During shorter boil times and dry hopping, hop oils don't evaporate as much, so get the non-bitter aspects of the hops during shorter boil times and/or flameout/dry-hopping additions.
- Alpha Acid: Basis of bittering; quick breakdown: Humolone, Cohumulaone, Adhumulone, Posthumulone, Prehumulone.
- Beta Acid: Slow breakdown: Lupulone, Colupulone, Adlupulone.
- Noble Hops [original Hops, Central Europe]: Terrnanger, Spalt, Hallertauer, Saaz; *Spalt, Styrian Goldings, Perle, Hersbrucker*

More Phenomenal Belgian Breweries to check out:

Cantillon Oude Gueuze Lindemans Rodenbach Monk's Café
Cuvée des Jacobins Liefman's Brasserie Dupont Brasserie Fantome St. Bernardus
Brasserie d'Achouffe Brasserie de la Senne Brouwerij Verhaeghe Guezerie Tilquin Trappistes Rochefort
Celis Chimay Duvel Orval Petrus Westmalle Westvleteren

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