

# Keystone Homebrew Supply Newsletter

February 2004

## Call to Arms!

### *War of the Worts IX Is Just Around the Corner*



The battle plans have been drawn up; the date has been set; all that's left to do is muster the troops. This means you! Our contest attracts competitors from across the country, and while we welcome them, we really like to have local brewers dominate the competition. This means that we need lots of local entries. We want to prove to the surrounding and national homebrew communities that Keystone Homebrew brewers are the best.

On top of the satisfaction of crushing other brewing clubs, the war is set to yield some amazing plunder. Prizes include a 40-quart Polarware brew pot as well as gift certificates and beer from all the cool local breweries and pubs; so join the Keystone cause and enter lots of homebrewed beers into the War of the Worts.

The War of the Worts is the area's biggest homebrew competition and is sanctioned by both the BJCP (Beer Judge Certification Program) and the AHA (American Homebrewers Association). Expert judging and great prizes attract over 200 entries each year. This is a great opportunity to have your homemade beer, cider, and mead evaluated by BJCP-registered judges.

Prizes and awards will be given for beers placing first, second, and third in each category, and for Best of Show. The deadline to enter is February 14, 2004. There is an extended deadline for entries dropped off at Keystone Homebrew: February 18.

Judging, which is closed to the public, starts at 9:30 A.M. on February 21 at The Drafting Room in Spring House, PA. Brewers and the public are welcome to the awards ceremony where winners will be announced and prizes will be awarded, starting at 4:30 P.M. Additional information, including entry forms and judge and steward sign-up forms, is available on the Keystone Hops Web site: [www.keystonehops.org](http://www.keystonehops.org).

## Questions?

Please contact one of the competition organizers if you have any questions.

Vince Galet (610) 831-5371  
[vince\\_galet@merck.com](mailto:vince_galet@merck.com)

Jason Harris (215) 855-0100  
[jason@keystonehomebrew.com](mailto:jason@keystonehomebrew.com)

Al Folsom (Judge Registrar) (215) 343-6851  
[alan@folsoms.net](mailto:alan@folsoms.net)

## Judges and Stewards

If you would like to be a Judge or Steward, please use the online registration form at <http://www.keystonehops.org/wotw/judgereg.cfm> or contact Alan Folsom, Judge Registrar at (215) 343-6851, or Keystone Homebrew Supply at (215) 855-0100 for details. Judges should have some BJCP training. No experience is necessary for stewards who help organize, shuttle beer back and forth, earn points toward BJCP certification, and learn a little about beer tasting along the way.

## The New Face at Keystone Homebrew *David Salaba*

The newest member of the Keystone Homebrew staff is Dave Salaba. You may have noticed his name in the list of gold medal winners in *Winemaker* magazine's competition. With over 25 years of personal wine-making experience, Dave has produced many award-winning wines. A graduate microbiologist and recent retiree from a local pharmaceutical company, Dave is continuing to increase his base of his wine knowledge by taking courses from the famous fermentation school at University of California-Davis.

If you would like to tap into Dave's experience, he is working at Keystone on Tuesdays from 10 to 7. Also look for his contributions to our expanding newsletters.

## Keystone Homebrew Supply Named "Retailer of the Year" by *Winemaker Magazine!*

Keystone Homebrew does its best to help our winemakers make award-winning wine, and we feel that this award recognizes our commitment to supplying our customers with the best ingredients, equipment, and advice. We would like to thank all of our winemakers who entered this competition.

Winemaker awards the **Retailer of the Year** prize to the store that supplies the most winning winemakers. The award is based on a weighted-points system with points accumulated by winning winemakers. As *Winemaker's* award shows, when you want to make the best, come shop with the best.

## Our Winemakers Win BIG in *Winemaker Magazine's* Wine Competition

*Winemaker* magazine has announced the winners in their second annual wine competition. Keystone Homebrew would like to congratulate all of our winning winemakers. We are proud of our Keystone winemakers and with luck we will have the pleasure of tasting some of these award-winning wines during our spring wine tastings (see the calendar on page 7). Here are the winning Keystone Homebrew Supply customers:



Winemaker	Category	Medal	Wine Entered
Richard & Janine Bowser, Bath Kent Fried, Phoenixville Tyrone Hollie, Coopersburg	Cabernet Sauvignon	Bronze	Selection Estate Woodbridge Cabernet 2002
	Chardonnay	Silver	100% Chardonnay
	Other White Vinifera Varietals	Gold	Selection Müller-Thurgau 2002
William La Pointe, Malvern	Merlot	Bronze	Selection Est. Napa Stag's Leap Merlot 2002
	Apple/Pear Varietals/Blends	Bronze	Island Mist Green Apple/Riesling 2002
	Chardonnay	Bronze	Selection Lim. Ed. Napa Chardonnay 2002
	Other White Vinifera Varietals	Bronze	100% Trebbiano di Soave
	Cabernet Franc	Silver	100% Cabernet Franc
	Shiraz/Syrah	Gold	Selection Lim. Ed. Syrah/Mourvedre 2002
	Zinfandel	Gold	Selection Estate Lodi Old Vine Zinf. 2002
Raymond Kijak, Bensalem	Other Red Vinifera Varietals	Silver	RJ Spagnols Cru Select RQ Barbaresco 2002
	Red Vinifera Bordeaux Blends	Bronze	RJ Spagnols RQ Cab./Syrah/Merlot 2002
	Berry Fruit	Bronze	100% Blueberry
Judy Parsons, Green Lane	Other White Vinifera Varietals	Bronze	100% Pinot Grigio
	Port Style	Bronze	Selection Port Fortified with 8% Brandy
Matt Powroznik, Southampton	Chardonnay	Silver	100% Chardonnay
	Cabernet Sauvignon	Silver	80% Cabernet Sauvignon 20% Merlot 2002
David Salaba, Doylestown	Other Red Vinifera Varietals	Gold	100% Nebbiolo 2002
	Other Red Vinifera Blends	Gold	50% Barbera 50% Valdespina 2002
	Other Red Vinifera Blends	Bronze	75% Cabernet Sauvignon 25% Merlot 2002
	Vinifera Late Harvest/Ice Wine	Bronze	100% Riesling 2002
	Sparkling Grape Sweet	Silver	100% Muscat 2002
	Riesling	Gold	100% Riesling 2001
	Fruit Mead	Gold	Clover Honey, Currants, Gooseberries 2002
	Fruit Mead	Bronze	Clover Honey, Cranberries 2002

## When Should I Bottle My Wine?

by David Salaba

We often receive this question from our customers. Like many things in life, when you get into the subject, it's not as simple as it sounds; it depends on a number of important considerations. For example, do you prefer a young, easy drinking wine, in the style of a French Nouveau, or do you prefer a wine that is more complex, with richer flavors, one that is smoother and fuller in the mouth? Are you able, like most professional wineries, to store your wine from several months to a year, enabling oak barrels or other oak additives to work their magic? Do you have the patience to *craft*, rather than just *make*, your wine? Have you made sure that your juice has fermented to complete dryness? If it's a red or a selected white made from fresh juice, has it completed malolactic fermentation so that residual yeast or other microorganisms are not going to come to life after you have bottled the wine? These are but a few of the many things you need to consider when attempting to answer the question, "When should I bottle my wine?" At Keystone we are prepared to help guide you through the process, and help take some of the mystery out of the subject.

***I made some red wine from fresh juice. When should I bottle it?*** First, double check with a hydrometer reading to ensure that there is no residual sugar and that it has fermented to dryness. Next, you will want to sulfite the wine to ensure that it will stay healthy and sound by adding 1/4 teaspoon potassium metabisulfite to each 5 gallons of finished wine. At this point you are faced with a decision. Do you want to start drinking the wine within the next three months (as soon as it has cleared), or wait until it has aged a bit more?

If the answer is sooner, rather than later, we suggest that you divide your wine into various-sized portions. Here's why: Any vessel that contains wine must always be kept full in order to prevent oxidation and keep spoilage organisms out. By dividing five gallons of wine into several smaller containers (such as a 3-gallon carboy, a 1-gallon jug, and two 1/2-gallon bottles), you will be able to keep the larger containers full while providing yourself with small containers of wine for consumption.

If, on the other hand, your decision is to let the wine develop additional complexity and a smoother, fuller taste, you will take a very different path which can take up to a year,

but will result in a different, elegant style of wine. After the primary fermentation, skip the addition of sulfite step mentioned above and, in a storage space that is at least 64°F, add a malolactic bacteria culture (which Keystone carries) to your new wine. This reduces the amount of malic acid (which is a tart acid found in all red wines and many white wines) while providing softness and complexity. This process takes about three to four weeks and will generate a small amount of carbon dioxide, so you'll need to use a water lock (airlock) on the carboy. Most well-made wines around the world undergo malolactic fermentation because almost all red wines (and some whites) will benefit from it. Should your wine be any different? We think not!

Malolactic fermentation completion can be confirmed by a simple test, which the staff at Keystone will be happy to help you with. Once malolactic fermentation is complete, you are ready to rack off your wine one last time into a clean, sanitized container and add 1/4 teaspoon of metabisulfite to each five gallons and make your final decision about your new wine: Oak or no oak? This decision is purely a personal one, but more information is available in the Winter, 2002 Keystone newsletter, available online at <http://keystonehomebrew.com/newsnov02.pdf>.

After quietly aging your wine for several more months (depending on your patience and willpower, for thirst is a dangerous thing!) you are ready to bottle your wine into clean, sanitized bottles. As professional wineries do, the wine ought to be laid away for at least 3 months before drinking.

We should mention that there are alternate methods that many traditional winemakers follow which depart from the above techniques. These methods allow "natural" yeasts (yeasts that are carried on the surface of the grapes) to initiate the fermentation rather than adding a commercial wine yeast. Experienced winemakers point out that while this method can produce a satisfactory wine, there is also the chance that the wine may not ferment completely because "natural" yeasts have a low tolerance (around 8-10%) to alcohol, and thus may die before they are able to ferment the wine to dryness.

Additionally, keep in mind that any residual sugar in bottled wine is an invitation for trouble. Stray yeast cells that remain in the wine can start to re-ferment later, when the weather is warmer, causing the corks to pop or bottles to explode. If the bottles remain corked, the wine may be "fizzy" (carbon dioxide in the wine--considered a serious

*(Continued on page 4)*

fault) or cloudy. In addition to unwanted yeast activity, relying on natural yeast alone can result in malolactic fermentation occurring somewhere down the road (usually in the bottle), causing further grief to the winemaker.

However, we are quick to point out that many traditional winemakers have been making wine for years with no apparent trouble. We mention the difficulty related to natural yeasts only because we receive many phone calls about “exploding bottles” and “cloudy stuff floating in my bottled wine” during the winemaking season. Our advice to those traditional winemakers who want to avoid these problems is to keep the new wine in a carboy until early summer when the season’s warmth will encourage any re-fermentation to take place before bottling.

### *I make wines from Brew King (Wine Expert) and RJ Spagnols box kits. When should I bottle them?*

The simple answer is not before the instructions tell you its OK to bottle the wine. Additional aging is fine as long the wine is racked into a clean carboy and topped up to the neck of the carboy. We feel that most kit wines improve with additional aging, providing that you have added adequate sulfites. Manufacturers’ instructions generally indicate that wine aging for more than six months should receive an extra 1/4 teaspoon of potassium metabisulphite to protect the wine while aging. Keystone never recommends subjecting a kit wine to malolactic fermentation. The kits have already been processed to eliminate the need for this step. Malolactic fermentation is solely for fresh juice and fresh grape wines.

If all this sounds like a headache, you may well ask yourself, Is this worth it? Well, we at Keystone think so, and we are committed to helping our customers proudly make fine wines. Keystone customers, as well as our staff, have produced wines and beers that have won many gold and silver medals at competitions around the country. We believe that you can, too.

## Seasonal Hop Offering

### Spring Offering: Simcoe

To bring you the finest selection of the freshest hops, Keystone Homebrew is starting a **seasonal hop offering**. You’ll get the chance to vote for your favorite hard-to-find hop, and we’ll break it down into 8-ounce bulk packages for

preorders, with any extras sold in 1-ounce bags on a first-come basis. To get the ball rolling, our intrepid homebrew investigators have selected the first offering: Simcoe hop pellets.

Never heard of Simcoe? Well, of course not! It’s been a West Coast secret since its first release in 2000. We infiltrated one of Oregon’s great microbreweries and discovered this hop. Full Sail Brewing, for example, considers it a key ingredient in their summertime specialty ale.

You won’t find this hop anywhere else because this trademarked variety is rarely offered, and even then in 11-pound minimum orders.

Simcoe is a unique American hybrid. Although it is primarily a bittering hop (12-14% AA), its pine-like aroma is highly sought after to make distinctive pale ales. Also described as citrusy and refined, Simcoe’s flavor is believed superior due to low cohumulone levels. Its rated storability is good, and Simcoe will stay fresh for months if kept well sealed in a freezer.

You can preorder 8 ounces or more of Simcoe pellets from our Web site, or by calling or stopping by the store.

Nominate a hop by March 1 and it will be voted on March 15-22, if sources are available. The most popular choice will become the spring seasonal hop, announced in our April newsletter.

## Upcoming Homebrew Contest

### The BUZZ Off

Saturday, May 22, at Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant  
3 West Gay Street, West Chester, PA 19380

The BUZZ Off is one of the top Philadelphia-area homebrew competitions. You can be assured that your beer will be judged by qualified BJCP judges and that they will do a very thorough job evaluating your beer and providing you with valuable feedback. In addition it is a very festive event for all who attend.

The BUZZ Off is a qualifying event for the prestigious Masters Championship of Amateur Brewing (MCAB). Brewers who win in the qualifying styles will be allowed to enter the MCAB national round. For more details, visit [www.hbd.org/mcab](http://www.hbd.org/mcab).

The BUZZ Off is also the final competition for the Delaware Valley Homebrewer of the Year (DVHY), awarded to the brewer winning the most cumulative points in DVHY events throughout the brewing season.

More info: <http://hbd.org/buzz/BUZZ%20Off.htm>.



## Keystone Homebrew E-Mails!

### *Don't Be Left in the Dark; Get in on Special Deals and Events*

We do our best at Keystone Homebrew to keep everyone in the loop. Modern technology has provided us with an amazing tool: e-mail. Keystone's technology allows us to keep you informed with the latest specials and news via e-mail. While our "snail mail" newsletter announces most wine and beer events, often times events and product specials come up too fast for us to get them in print.

If you have not been receiving our e-mails, you may have missed out on two recent events which we were able to promote only through e-mail. The first was the amazing presentation by **Tim Vandergrift from Brew King** (now with a new company name: "Wine Expert"). This event took place at the Joseph Ambler Inn in November, where 75 attendees were treated to a tasting of previous years' Limited Edition kits and commercial examples of this year's kits. Everybody received a Selection wine glass, other promotional items, and a coupon for Brew King products equal to the admission price, in addition to wine, snacks, and an informative seminar. Almost all of the attendees found out via e-mail.

The second event was **Keystone Homebrew's End-of-Year Inventory Clearance Sale**. This last-minute sale took place on December 29, 30, and 31 and hundreds of you with e-mail took advantage. We offered 10% off all our stock, and took an additional 5% off for cash payment. All you had to do was be in the know, and bring in a copy of your e-mail or recite the phrase "You know, that I know, that you hate counting."

So what's the next e-mail-only promotion? I have no idea, otherwise it would be in this newsletter! But if history repeats itself, it is sure to be worth your while. There are three easy ways to get on our e-mail list:

1. Next time you are in the store, just let us know that you want to receive Keystone e-mails.
2. Sign up on our Web page's mailing list signup form.
3. E-mail [info@keystonehomebrew.com](mailto:info@keystonehomebrew.com) and type "sign me up for those cool Keystone e-mails." Please also include your name and phone number.

## *A Few More Thoughts on E-Mail*

All free e-mail services are not created equal. Juno and Netzero have recently started blocking e-mail from many small, independent internet service providers like the one we use: Navpoint Internet Services. This means that I can't send you Keystone e-mails if you use Juno or Netzero. You may want to let them know that you don't like them deciding who is entitled to e-mail you, or you may want to try Yahoo or Hotmail: both have free e-mail services that let you get Keystone e-mails. Some spam filters may block Keystone e-mails, but adding our e-mail address to your e-mail "safe list" or designating our mail as "not spam" should remedy this problem.

If you are tired of the majority of your e-mail being spam, start turning the tide by getting interesting and informative Keystone e-mails. We are committed to providing you with concise and informative e-mails. We promise never to sell, rent, or give your e-mail to other companies. We also promise not to barrage you with multiple messages over a short period of time and to honor any e-mail removal requests. Join the thousands of other informed Keystone customers, and next time around you won't miss the sale, promotion, event, or special-order merchandise opportunity. Get Keystone e-mail today!

## Madagascar Bourbon Vanilla Beans

These are the most prized vanilla beans in the world, renowned for their superior flavor and remarkable aromatics. Brewers use them to make flavored beer, but you can also use them to make your own vanilla extract and in your cooking.

We have just received our latest shipment right before the massive price increase. Madagascar's 2004 crop will be less than half of its usual size according to Nielsen-Massey Vanillas, our supplier. The price of vanilla beans will be *doubled* the next time we order. Our current price is \$2.95 per bean and we have a limited supply.



# Grow Mushrooms in your own home!

**Deadline to Order: March 1**

We're continuing to promote our mushroom kits by offering all the mushroom kits that we sold in the past plus a new variety, described below. Full descriptions can be found in previous mailers, available on our Web site.

## **New!** Maitake Mushroom Patch™

Maitake mushrooms (*Grifola frondosa*), also known as "Hen of the Woods," are succulent and delicious. They are also one of the most popular and widely recognized medicinal mushrooms. A 55-70°F environment is needed for this kit. Simply unwrap and water once or twice a day. Clusters of Maitake will spring forth in 2-3 weeks. After your first harvest, the Maitake Mushroom Patch can be transferred to an outdoor bed for subsequent fruitings, which can occur in 6-12 months. \$32.00

Other available varieties include:

Shiitake Mushroom Patch	\$26.00
Enokitake Mushroom Patch	\$26.00
Almond Portobello Mushroom Patch	\$26.00
Pioppino Mushroom	\$29.00
Pearl Oyster Mushrooms	\$26.00
Cinnamon Cap Mushrooms	\$29.00
Stone Mushroom Patch	\$26.00

## New Product Better Bottles™

You may have seen these advertised in the beer and wine magazines, and now we have them. If their claims are true, Better Bottles are sure to replace glass carboys in many home breweries. Better Bottles are lightweight, shatter resistant ("unbreakable" according to the manufacturer), and made of food-grade plastic that, like glass, does not let oxygen to pass through to your beer or wine.

For those of you who know the pain of seeing your carboy explode after clinking two glass carboys together, or setting a full one on the floor too hard, this new product is just what you've been waiting for.

Available in 3-, 5-, and 6-gallon sizes, they can be purchased with or without a racking port in the bottom.

Carboys with ports require the racking port attachment which is basically a specialized spigot. While we'll sell the official airlock assembly, you can also simply (and more cheaply) use a drilled #10 rubber stopper to hold a standard airlock.

3 Gallon, Plain	\$19.95	3 Gallon, Ported	\$21.50
5 Gallon, Plain	\$19.95	5 Gallon, Ported	\$21.50
6 Gallon, Plain	\$23.50	6 Gallon, Ported	\$25.00
Racking outlet	\$18.95		

## Keg-Only Competition Saturday, June 12

Keystone Homebrew will have its first ever keg-only competition. The details are still being worked out, but here is what we have so far:

1. Beers must be presented in almost full kegs (they will be weighed).
2. There will be two divisions: traditionally styled beers, judged by BJCP guidelines, and nontraditional beers that don't fit into a specified style, which will be judged on their own merits.
3. Four winners will be designated for each division. Divisions may be subdivided.
4. Winners will be bestowed the title of "Keystone Brewer."
5. Winners will be given a \$50 gift certificate to Keystone, a Keystone Homebrew shirt with "Keystone Brewer" embroidered on it, and a free pass into the Brew at the Zoo Beer Festival.
6. Winning brewers must be willing to have their beer served at the Brew at the Zoo Beer Festival. Credit will be given to each brewer.

After the initial judging, we will invite the remaining brewers to share their beers with the general public who will be invited to choose a People's Choice winner by ballot. This brewer will also win a \$50 Keystone gift certificate.

### In the next mailer . . .

Grow hops: how-to, and available varieties  
Winners of the War of the Worts  
The next limited hop offering

## Keystone Calendar

Our calendar is always packed with fun and informative events.

*Saturday, February 14*

### **Deadline to Enter the War of the Worts IX**

Extended drop off at Keystone Homebrew February 18.

*Thursday, February 19*

### **Keystone Hops Homebrew Club Meeting**

7 P.M. at Keystone Homebrew.

*Saturday, February 21*

### **War of the Worts IX**

While the judging is closed, the awards ceremony is open to the public and starts at 4:30 P.M. at The Drafting Room.

*Monday, March 1*

### **Deadline to Order Mushrooms**

The most varieties of gourmet, grow-at-home mushrooms ever!

*Thursday, March 18*

### **Keystone Hops Homebrew Club Meeting**

7 P.M. at Keystone Homebrew. Intraclub Bock Beer Competition.

*Thursday, April 15*

### **Keystone Hops Homebrew Club Meeting**

7 P.M. at Keystone Homebrew. Taxes are due postmarked by midnight.

*Saturday, May 1*

### **National Homebrew Day**

This is your chance to brew beer with other homebrewers and celebrate the national day dedicated to our craft. For brewers looking to get into all-grain brewing, this is an invaluable opportunity to get some first-hand knowledge.

*Sunday, May 16*

### **Wine Tasting**

Our customer wine tastings are fun and informative events that take place at the store. Snacks will be served and everyone who brings wine gets a \$5 coupon from Keystone.

*Thursday, May 20*

### **Keystone Hops Homebrew Club Meeting**

7 P.M. at Keystone Homebrew.

*Saturday, June 12*

### **Keystone's Keg-Only Competition**

Winners will be given a \$50 gift certificate, embroidered T-shirt, and a free pass into the Brew at the Zoo Beer Festival.

*Sunday, June 13*

### **Wine Tasting**

Our customer wine tastings are fun and informative events that take place at the store. Snacks will be served and everyone who brings wine gets a \$5 coupon from Keystone.

*Saturday, June 19*

### **"Brew at the Zoo" Beer Festival**

At the Elmwood Zoo in Norristown to raise funds for Delaware Valley Chapter of the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation. Look for Keystone Homebrew and the "Keystone Brewers."

Receive a **FREE** keychain

**Bottle Opener**

with any purchase

Keystone Homebrew Supply  
(215) 855-0100

Expires 3/31/04

code: KMF04

**\$5.<sup>00</sup> OFF**

any \$50<sup>00</sup> purchase

Not valid with other offers, coupons, or previous purchases

Keystone Homebrew Supply  
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Expires 3/31/04

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(215) 855-0100

Expires 3/31/04

code: KMF04



## Keystone Hops Schedule

*Third Thursday of the Month at 7 P.M.*

Mark your calendar with these upcoming meetings:

*February 19      March 18      April 22*

Club meetings are at the store and are open to all interested homebrewers. At February's meeting we will move beer to The Drafting Room in preparation for the War of the Worts, so if you have a choice, take the minivan, not the Mini.

At March's meeting we'll have an intracub homebrew competition featuring bock beers. All meeting attendees will judge the beer and be entered into a raffle for a six-pack of a classic commercial bock beer. Winner's prize is a six-pack of the commercial beer plus a Keystone t-shirt. Style guidelines will be on the club's Web site: [www.keystonehops.org](http://www.keystonehops.org)

## INSIDE THIS EDITION



Better Bottles™ Now Available  
Feature Article: Bottling Wine  
Limited Time Special Hop  
New Mushroom Offer

## STORE HOURS

Monday 10-6

Tuesday-Thursday 10-7

Friday 10-9

Saturday 10-5

Sunday 11-5



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Montgomeryville, PA 18936

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