



February 2019 Newsletter

Barley Varietals and Flavor

Long before those fermenters are filled, we are working behind the scenes to provide brewers and distillers with interesting and complex barley-malt flavor. In the South, we plant exclusively winter-barley varieties which are sown in October and harvested from June to July. This is in contrast to the spring varieties grown in the Western United States and Canada. Working with our seed suppliers, we run test batches of specific varietals of two-row and six-row barleys. While certain varieties may perform quite well in terms of extract, enzyme activity, and yield, they must also pass the taste test.

“There is absolutely no substitute for the best. Good food cannot be made of inferior ingredients masked with high flavor. It is true thrift to use the best ingredients available and to waste nothing.”

—**James Beard**

The sensory part of our evaluation is the most important process in determining what we will select for a farmer to grow. Each variety is test malted using a standard recipe. Once completed, we employ the hot-steep method (think malt tea) to allow for a full sensory evaluation which is rated on a corresponding flavor chart. A few of the descriptors we use to evaluate varieties include grainy, bready, biscuity, toasty, earthy, grassy, green tea, honey, fruity, and spicy.

Just recently we conducted this evaluation on several new two-row varieties and detected unpleasant flavors in a few that were harsh and earthy, almost beet-like. Not something we want in our finished product! As we look ahead, we will continue to work with seed breeders to help select the most flavorful varieties for wider cultivation. This process will take years, but the results will be worth the wait.

Some of the varieties that we currently work with include Flavia, Violetta, Calypso, and Thoroughbred, which all have distinct character and terroir. These aforementioned barley varieties are unique to the South and are optimized for growing in our distinct climate. For some products, we may blend varieties to achieve greater complexity in much the same way that a wine-maker or a coffee-roaster selects for a desired flavor profile. Many larger malting companies do not weight sensory as highly as we do and tend to select varieties based on volume yield potential. This is where Riverbend is quite different. One of our primary missions is to expand the flavor palate for brewers and provide new avenues for innovation. As the craft malting movement continues to evolve, we will bring ever more complex malted barley to market for our brewery and distillery partners.

Malt Backbone in India Pale Ales

I know what you are thinking... IPA's are all about the hops and malt is a secondary consideration. But hear me out. No category of beer has as many sub-categories as India Pale Ale. If we step through the haze, and bypass the west coast, there are some really great classics (I'm looking at you Bell's Two Hearted!) that benefit from the body and complex sweetness that a well-crafted grist can provide. This is especially true with the Session IPA's (or Pale Ale for purists) style that can often suffer from a watery mouthfeel as a result of their lower volume grain bill. Utilizing richer base malts and small amounts of wheat and specialties can add much needed body and character that complements the modern tropical hop flavors.



What's Brewing? Featuring Brent Manning

I walk into a lot of breweries and taste a lot of beer. My tastes and preferences are often heading in several directions at once. While my crush on classic German lagers is still burning bright, an “old” friend from the West Coast has been catching my eye.....the Imperial(ish) Red IPA. This style leans into a space that melds malt complexity with sticky hops fighting for a place on your palate. The prime examples walk you through multiple layers of malt-driven biscuit, candy, toffee, with a hint of toast. On the hop side, a classic mix of Columbus, Centennial, and Cascade always works well. The recipe below calls for a modern interpretation that utilizes the tropical fruit and peach flavors of Galaxy and Azacca.

Red India Pale Ale

Grain Bill:

*60% Riverbend Southern Select
22% Riverbend Light Munich (10L)
5% Riverbend Heritage Malt
5% Riverbend Appalachian Wheat
3.5% Crystal 40
3.5% Crystal 80
1% Chocolate Malt*

Target O.G. 1.070

Color: 15 SRM

Hop Schedule:
Galaxy @ 60 min (~30 IBU)
Azacca @ 30 min (~16 IBU)
Idaho 7 @ 15 min (~16 IBU)
Azacca @ Flameout
Galaxy @ Flameout
Target: ~70 IBU's

Dry Hop Schedule
Azacca & Galaxy

Yeast:
WLP041 Pacific Ale Yeast

Ferment @ 67F to encourage some ester formation



Bière de Femme Festival: Saturday, March 2nd 2019.

Riverbend is proud to be a sponsor of the Bière De Femme beer festival, celebrating its 3rd Annual Festival in North Carolina. This year's event will be held at the Highland Brewing Company Event Center, boasting **more than 35 incredible one-off beers** made specifically for this festival **by women beer professionals from each brewery.**

Our grain specialist, Jordan Ullrich, is working with Brandi Hillman from Hillman Beer to brew a Kottbuser featuring our Streaker Oats and locally-sourced honey for the event. The Kottbuser

is a classic German white beer that utilizes a heavy dose of malted wheat and oats along with classic noble hops. Yeast character is less pronounced than the standard Hefeweizen.

What could be even better than that?? **100%** of all proceeds go toward scholarships to help women in NC and beyond improve their lives by giving them education and marketable skills in the beer industry. Craft beer offers thousands of respectable jobs for hard working North Carolinians, but they require specialty education that is not always accessible for struggling women. Come out to have some spectacular, rare beer and give a boost to a local woman who could use some help to jump-start her career.



Riverbend's Kim Thompson and Jordan Ullrich brewing with Brandi Hillman of Hillman Beer

About Riverbend Malt

Riverbend Malt House, founded in 2010 and headquartered in Asheville, NC, is one of the original craft malting facilities in the US. Utilizing grain sourced from local, family owned farmers, Riverbend malt fuels high quality, unique beverages produced by hundreds of North America's finest craft breweries and distilleries. For a Product Catalog or Pricing, please reach out to matt@riverbendmalt.com. We offer next day shipping on orders received before Noon, Tuesday – Thursday. Pre-Milling is available for an additional charge and additional lead time.

Cheers!

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