



Official Newsletter of Forest City Brewers January Edition

Next Meeting will be held at **Prairie Street Brewing
Company**

Wednesday, February 5th, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

Beer Trivia Question

Which European monastery is known for brewing a beer that was, for many years, considered the rarest and most sought-after in the world due to its limited production and direct-only sales?

Read to the end to find out if you're right!

HOW TO CONTACT FOREST CITY BREWERS

[Homepage: Forest City Brewers](#)

forestcitybrewers@gmail.com

[Facebook: Forest City Brewers](#)

Forest City Brewers

NOW TAKING 2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES!
\$35 – SINGLE // \$50-CO-HABITATION
Currently 35 members have signed-up

January Meeting Notes

President, Scott Walker, started off the meeting welcoming everyone. He reminded all members that 2025 memberships can be renewed. Membership payments are accepted at the meeting or by visiting the FCB website. Scott explained the styles for the 2025 monthly competitions. See this newsletter and the website for the monthly categories. Styles were based on the 2021 BJCP guidelines and were chosen by the survey respondents.

Next, we talked about the upcoming events for the Forest City Brewers. This included the FCB Winter Party and Dinner, and a future bus trip on April 5th possibly to the Quad Cities. The FCB Winter Party and Dinner will be January 18th at Shooter's Bar & Grill. The club will be providing the main course and members can bring sides or desserts (not required), maybe something made with beer? Door prizes will be raffled off for attendees and a White Elephant Gift exchange will occur. (No need to bring a beer gift)

Treasurer, Jerry Machula, provided a memoir for FCB member Ken Shultz one of the OG's of FCB. Ken was the first in the FCB to hold a BJCP certificate. Jerry also talked about Jimmy Carter passing at 100 years old on Dec. 29th, 2024. He was instrumental for American homebrewing by [legalizing it federally in 1978 via H.R. 1337](#). However, there were hold outs on the state level - Mississippi and Alabama didn't legalize homebrewing until 2013.

Monthly Style Table Competition

January Style Table – 26c – Belgian Tripel

1st Place

Lesley Davis

2nd Place

Andy Swindell

3rd Place

Ben Barr, Mike Bohn

January Open Table

1st Place

Mike Sears – Hard Cider

2nd Place

Joe Coldwate – Mango/Chile Chelada Wheat

3rd Place

Jerry Machula – Swithwick's Irish Ale

Honorable Mention:

Dave Benson – Peach Malt Liqueur

Mark Davis – Eisbock

Craig Milius – Wild Cherry Sour

Current Point Standings

<https://forestcitybrewers.us/index.php/contest-points/>

*Please remember to preregister your beers for the Brewer of the Year contest by registering your beer thru the Forest City Brewers web page.

<https://forestcitybrewers.us/index.php/pre-register/>

Upcoming Competition Styles

February: 16B – Oatmeal Stout

March: 15A – Irish Red Ale

April: 18A – Blonde Ale

May: 25A – Belgian Blond Ale

June: 21A – American IPA

July: 23/28 – Sour or Wild Ale: 23A. Berliner Weisse, 23B. Flanders Red Ale, 23C. Oud Bruin, 23D. Lambic, 23E. Gueuze, 23F. Fruit Lambic, 23G. Gose, 28A. Brett Beer, 28B. Mixed-Fermentation Sour Beer, 28C. Wild Specialty Beer, 28D. Straight Sour Beer

August: S.M.A.S.H. Beer (Single Malt, Single Hop) Malt & Hop type must be specified when entering.

UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING TASTERS GUILD

January Tasters Guild will be at Shooter's
January 18, 2025
6:30 – 9 pm

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

Winter/Holiday Party

When: January 18th 3pm – 8p

Where: Shooters Tap room 4007 E State St,
Rockford, IL

As always, the club will be purchasing all the food for the main course, but members are encouraged (not required) to bring a side dish to pass. The main dish is still TBD, but we'll be ordering from the Shooter's kitchen.

Homebrew and commercial beer are welcomed and encouraged to bring to share. Shooters also has a full bar and extensive tap list as well. This is a paid members only event, plus 1 guest.

Fondy Brew Fest

When: Saturday, February 1st, 2025

Where: Homebrew Alley Beerfest in Fond du Lac, WI.

Some members have volunteered and will be representing the FCB club at the Homebrew Alley Beerfest in Fond du Lac, WI. On Feb. 1st.

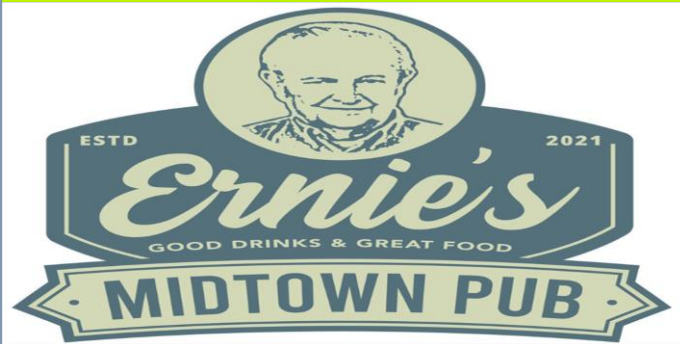
Thank you for all your support!

<https://www.fondybrewfest.com/>

And the Answer Is...

Westvleteren Brewery (Trappist Westvleteren) – This Belgian Trappist brewery, run by monks at the Saint Sixtus Abbey, produces some of the most highly regarded beers in the world, particularly Westvleteren 12. For years, the only way to purchase it was by making a reservation via phone and picking it up in person at the monastery, adding to its mystique.

TASTERS GUILD



This month's Tasters guild was held at Ernie's Midtown Pub on Wednesday December 18th, 6:30. It is located at 1025 5th Ave, Rockford, IL.



Thanks to everyone that made this a great night to gather, consume fabulous concoctions, share some beers and share some great stories.



This month's Tasters guild will be held at Shooter's Bar on Saturday January 18th, 3pm – 8pm. It is located at 4007 E State St, Rockford, IL

NEW FOREST CITY DISCOUNT

We have a new **DISCOUNT** being offered by Welders Supply Company located 3485 Brick Dr, Rockford, IL 779-208-4055

Forest City Brewers is being offered the opportunity to participate in Co2 tank **exchanges**. If you need Co2 Monday-Friday 7:30 AM till 4:30 PM, please stop by and give them a try.

- 5lb and 20lb tanks always available
- 2.5lb and 10lb tanks, please call-in advance to verify availability
- Co2 tanks are exchange only
- Just mention you are a member of "Forest City Brewers"
- Cash On Delivery – Pay when you exchange / pick-up

Here are the rates we are being provided for Co2;
2.5lb food grade cylinder exchange - \$10.41
5lb food grade cylinder exchange - \$12.50
10lb food grade cylinder exchange- \$14.00
20lb food grade cylinder exchange - \$20.00

Here are the rates for Nitrogen;
20Cf 75%Nit/25%Co2 cylinder exchange - \$12.00
150 Al 75Nit/25Co2 cylinder exchange - \$30.00
90Cf Nitrogen cylinder exchange - \$26.00
150Cf Nitrogen cylinder exchange - \$34.00

[Welders Supply Rockford Map Location \(Link\)](#)



2024 Brewer's of the Year



This Year's Brewers of the Year are

Lesley Davis on Style Table

Mark Davis on Open Table

This is a three-peat with this duo winning three consecutive years in either the Style Table or the Open Table.

2024 Style Table Year-end Standings

**1st – Lesley Davis 2nd – Jerry Machula
3rd – Joe Coldwate 4th Ryan Bergmann
5th – Mike Bohn**

2024 Open Table Year-end Standings

**1st – Mark Davis 2nd – Dave Benson
3rd – Joe Coldwate 4th Scott Walker
5th – Jerry Machula**

Congratulation's to everyone on a fantastic brewing year. Now let's keep it up into 2025.

Brewer of the Year & The Style Table are back for 2025. Just to recap how the competitions work, every month, we'll have two different tasting tables, a Style Table, and an Open Table

The Mystery of Yeast Blending: Are Two Strains Better Than One?

Most homebrewers are creatures of habit. We find a yeast strain that works for our go-to styles and stick with it. Chico for clean ales, 1318 for juicy IPAs, a trusty Belgian strain for those occasional dubbels. But every now and then, we stumble on an idea that shakes up our brewing process—like blending yeast strains.

There's something inherently exciting (or terrifying) about letting two different yeasts ferment a batch together. Will they play nice? Fight for dominance? Unlock flavors that neither strain could achieve alone? Or just end up in an awkward microbial stalemate?

The Case for Blending

Commercial breweries have been playing with yeast blends for years. Think of the signature esters in some farmhouse ales—often a mix of *Saccharomyces* and Brett. Or the way lager breweries have experimented with multiple strains to dial in attenuation and mouthfeel.

On the homebrew scale, blending yeast can add complexity, help balance out undesirable traits, and even improve fermentation reliability. For example:

- Pairing a high-attenuating strain with a low-attenuating one can prevent a beer from finishing too dry or too sweet.
- Combining a fruity ester bomb with a neutral workhorse can tame extreme flavors while keeping a touch of character.
- A mix of English and American ale yeasts might bridge the gap between clean and expressive, making for a unique take on an IPA

The Case Against It

But let's be real—sometimes, simplicity is king. Predictability is a beautiful thing in brewing, and blending introduces variables that can be tough to control. There's no easy way to know which yeast will dominate, how the balance will shift over time, or whether one strain will stall out halfway through fermentation.

Then there's the issue of repeatability. If you strike gold with a yeast blend, can you recreate it consistently? Maybe... if you're pitching fresh packs every time. But if you try to re-pitch the harvested slurry? Good luck guessing what's actually in there.

What's Your Take?

So where do you stand? Have you experimented with blending yeast strains in your homebrew? If not, would you?

Cheers All!!