

Adding Wood to Beer

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Topics

- History of wood in beer
- Should I wood my beer
- How to source
- Wood selection
- Wood preparation
- Spirit/Wine additions
- Sour Sticks
- Barrels

History

- The cask gets its first written mention in the 5th century BCE 2500 years ago
- Timmermans matures lambic in oak barrels since 1702
- IPA, RIS and other english beers were shipped in barrels to their destinations
- 20th century barrels became a less favourable shipping/storage method and they lost popularity in most breweries.
- Goose Island created BCBS early-mid 90s, Innis and Gunn started using barrels 2003
- Whiskey saves the day
- Now barrel aged varieties from the “classic” BBA RIS to experimental Tequila aged Berliner
- Where does that leave us homebrewers?

Should/can I Wood

- Long story short, you can. Bud “aged” on beechwood. Not so much for flavour
- Treat it like any other ingredient, what is your goal?
- Research! Has anyone else done it? Results?
- Ultimately your beer, your choice

Selection

- Type of wood/species
- Method of addition (chips, cubes, honey comb, “table leg”, slats, barrel)
- Surface to volume ratio needed/desired?
- Barrels = \$\$\$



Sourcing

- Home brew/wine shops
- Online retailers
- MUST BE CHEMICAL FREE
- Fresh lumber?
- Local distillery/winery/home wine maker

Preparing the wood

- Toasting
- Charring
- Grain exposure
- Sanitization



Spirit/Wine additions

- What are you trying to achieve?
- Liquor/wine selection
- Wine can contain critters like Brett and others. Steam/boil/bake or don't
- Home wine makers usually have tons of chips that they toss out
- How long should you soak your wood before adding

Sour Sticks

- Sour/funky microbes love to live in wood
- By harvesting these chips you can propagate more batches OR share with us
- Norwegian farmhouse Kveik brewers do this

Barrels

- Pricey
- Can be unique
- Romantic and pretty
- Multiple uses
- Allows oxygen in
- Not needed to make great wood aged beer
- Can get infected RIP +\$100



References

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