

Clearing your beer – the gelatine effect

There has been a lot of talk at my home brew club recently about clearing your beer. Should you or shouldn't you, how do you do it, does it affect flavour etc. So I thought we'd have a wee experiment to see. I've got a batch of Amber Ale in the fermenter just now and I know from previous brews that this beer doesn't clear very well naturally, so I thought it would be the perfect candidate to have a wee test with.

Now I'll get this out the way before people start bumping their gums.

You do not need to clear your beer, hazy beer is fine and will not do you any harm. Some people think hazy beer tastes better, some think clear beer tastes better. It's all about personal taste, however it's also nice to sometimes serve a nice clear beer and feel smug about how pretty is it to the beholder. There, preachy bit done.

Firstly why gelatine?

Well there are different ways to force clarify your beer, I say force because most times your home brewed beer will clear over time, however if you are too impatient or don't have time – gelatine is just one of the simplest and it's quite quick so I thought I'd use it for this example. It's really effective at dropping yeast out of solution and importantly all the haze-forming particulates.

Hints and Tips

If you add your gelatine to the keg rather than the fermenter, you'll have to pour off the first very cloudy pint before the beer clears up. Gelatine literally drops all the nasties down

to the bottom of the keg where the dip-tube pulls the beer from, that yuk will be the first thing pulled from the keg. After a pint or two, it'll be gorgeous.

If you had it to the fermenter then you have to be careful not to pull that stuff up the siphon when you rack your beer.

How do you?

So as I said you can fine with gelatin in either a fermenter, or in the keg. I go with the fermenter simply cause I don't want the faff of the gloop yuk in my keg, this way I can leave it behind as I rack to the keg and get clear beer from my first pour.

However, no matter which way you choose, you want the beer to be cold, and I mean COLD. The colder the beer is, the more haze-forming particulate will form. The more haze-forming particulate that forms, the more particulate the gelatine can fine out.

Ok so you've got your beer cold as a cold thing, lets go through step by step of what to do next:

1. Get a microwave-safe cup and measure out 150-200ml of cold water.
2. Add a teaspoon of gelatine and stir. I like using my thermometer probe cause I'm going to be using that to check temperature anyway.
3. Put the mixture in the microwave, and heat it 15-30 seconds at a time, stopping to stir and check the temperature. The gelatine will begin to dissolve as the solution heats.
4. The goal is to heat the gelatin to 65C, but not much over. All we are doing is pasteurising the solution, not trying to make jam.
5. Give the mixture one last stir and pour it straight into your cold beer. Very gently stir the fermenter or keg

with a sanitised spoon, and return it to your fridge for at least 48 hours then keg making sure to leave the yucky stuff at the bottom.

Easy!

Result

Ok so the point of this was to see how clear a problem beer would get with the use of gelatine. I followed the steps above and after 4 days (with the beer still in the fridge) I kegged it trying to leave behind the gelatine and trub.

The beer has only been sitting carbonating for a few days and this is the first glass I've poured from the keg.

Can't wait till it's properly carbonated.

