



IT'S PARTI TIME!!

WHAT IS PARTI-GYLE BREWING?

In essence, it is a medieval brewing technique involving drawing off the first part of the mash and using it to make strong ale or barley wine, then remashing the grain and drawing off the second runnings for a more ordinary, weak, and watery concoction called *small beer*.

HISTORY OF PARTI-GYLE BREWING

Breweries in the past had the ability to construct very large wooden mash tuns but did not yet have the ability to construct equally large kettles. Therefore, old English breweries usually ended up making three batches from a single high-gravity mash: a strong, a common, and a small. These were denoted on the barrels by X's for easy marking, as you're probably already familiar with the strong XXX symbol on alcohol that we're all familiar with from cartoons and the like, i.e. strong was 3 x's, common was 2 x's and 1 x was the small beer. Interestingly as well, this is also the basis for the denotation of Trappist style beers which used similar methods. As you might have guessed, the tripel was the first runnings, the dubbel was the second, and the almost entirely extinct Belgian single was from the third.

In many medieval breweries there were two kettles, and sometimes three, used to heat the water for the mashes and then subsequently receive and then boil the different worts. Another interesting method was that some breweries boiled the first wort in the first kettle, ran it to the coolship (their heat exchanger), refilled the first kettle with wort from the second mash tun, heated it, reflooded the mash, and collected the second wort in the kettle. Oftentimes the second wort was even boiled using the hops from the first batch to further minimize waste.

Now once the Industrial Revolution came around, the ability to create larger kettles finally became a reality. Because of this a revolution took place in 1722 with the first documented batch of 'real' porter. This new method of brewing that was borrowed from the parti-gyle method was called "entire" and for the first years of its existence, a batch of porter was

likewise known as “entire.” Using this method, all of the wort from the single mash was run to the same kettle and boiled at once to create a batch of consistent gravity. This has since become the prominent method of brewing, both at home and in commercial breweries, with the parti-gyle method beginning to fade into obscurity. At least, until this lecture and it’s glorious rebirth in 2014.

HOW TO DO A PARTI-GYLE HOMEBREW

So the way that Randy Mosher describes it in Radical Brewing is that, essentially, if you’re making a Barleywine or other strong beer, if you do your first runnings to make a 2.5 gallon batch of your “strong beer” you can use the second runnings to make a 5 gallon batch that (should be) around half the strength of your strong beer if your volumes and math are correct. This is referred to in parti-gyle brewing as the ‘one third-two thirds split’ and is probably the most common method. However, when I do this method myself, I am intending to get two 5 gallon batches out of it, so I calculate that my second 5 gallon batch is only going to be 1/4 as strong as my original strong beer which is pretty light but makes for a good lawnmower beer, and hey, you’re getting 10 gallons out of one 5 gallon mash, so I’m not complaining. Another fun thing to do is use different yeast in each of your fermenters and this gives you a fun opportunity to experiment with your small beer which will let the yeast character stand out much more than it would in a big-bodied beer.

So, in example, what you are having now is my Batch 100 Barleywine which has an OG that came out at 1.098, a point shy of the 1.100 I wanted. Therefore, the Mild that came from the second runnings of the same mash that you are also tasting is 1/4 as strong and I was able to get its OG which ended up being 1.022 so as you can see it came out pretty darn close to the original estimations.

The method to actually do this while you are brewing is as follows (and keep in mind, this is my method for doing the 50/50 split, not the common one third-two thirds split):

Brew up your Barleywine or strong ale as normal and collect the first 6 to 7 gallons in your kettle and begin boiling. If you have two kettles available (which gets a little hairy, but it will save time), you can go ahead and float the mash again with your sparge water to reduce the possibility of compaction and a stuck mash and then lautering again and run off your second runnings into the second kettle and begin boiling that about 20-30 minutes after your first boil starts so you have adequate time to chill the first wort before chilling the second. From there it’s just the normal brewing process – just make sure you calculate your IBUs out for your hopping appropriately for each of the batches. Remember, if you use this particular method

your weak beer is going to be pretty darn weak, around 3%, so it probably only needs one hop addition depending on what you're going for, but then again maybe a hop-bursted mini-centennial IPA around 65 IBUs could be fun, eh? In short, the parti-gyle is your oyster. Have fun with it.

To finish up, here are a few other fun ideas that medieval parti-gyle brewing practices have yielded over the centuries, and you could consider using these in your parti-gyle experiments:

1. Mixing the first, second, and (potentially) third runnings to achieve any combination of gravities desired.
2. Using the first runnings as-is, but fortifying the weaker second or third runnings with malt extract or honey.
3. Heard of Mash hopping or First Wort hopping techniques? They've become sort of a new fad, but they actually both originated in medieval times. There's not been a lot of research done on them, but they've been said to add an entirely different hop dimension to the beer though they only contribute around 10 IBUs at max to the finished beer. Try throwing an ounce of hops into your second running mash or add them to your kettle as the second runnings are flowing in pre-boil and give it a shot – why not?

For more information on the formulas and equations for parti-gyle brewing, see the following website or check out Randy Mosher's awesome book *Radical Brewing* and read his section on the subject:

<http://morebeer.com/brewingtechniques/library/backissues/issue2.2/mosher.html>