

Lagunitas Hop Philosophy

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Selection

- Talk to farmer or merchant: are there land plots or harvest windows/pick dates that you are preferring each year?
- Best to learn your preferences “blind” then replicate each year since beer quality is expected to be the same in the wake of changing raw materials
- A really good farmer will be able to present you with many lots, and knows exactly which one you will pick before you even choose
- Harvest date matters to us almost as much as the variety

Selection, continued

- Lagunitas tends to prefer late harvested hops, carefully riding the fine line between letting the oils express themselves and the hop going “funky”
- Let it hang and evaluate daily, still heeding dry matters, utilizing more sophisticated methods if possible (GC-MS); hopefully eliminating a portion of the inherent subjectivity & emotion
- But the entire year’s work can be easily destroyed by downstream processing

Processing

- Big surprise: volatile oils persist better at lower kiln temperatures
- Bed depths: shallower beds promote quality
- Bed airflow integrity: no blowholes; proper CFM adjustment
- Cooling room floor: the great equalizer
- Baling, leaf & stem, HIS and total time stored
- Pellet density 33-35 lbs./cubic foot for best travel and dissolve (“soft”)

Brewing

- Bitter with high alpha pellets in high gravity/high IBU worts & supplement with supercritical CO₂ extracts until there are no whirlpool losses
- Bitter with lower alpha varieties for lower strength worts
- Most if not all oil content & character is lost in the boil so why bother loading a lot of nice aromatic hops into the hot side; only the boiled aromatic attributes such as flavor/tactile components persist

Cellaring

- Preferred dry hop beer at or close to terminal, post dry hop with “hop cannon” and through sweep 90’s into the tank
- Taller tanks get more “travel time” & therefore theoretically benefit less and less from a pump/re-circ/rouse regime
- Double dry hop? Why? It’s just more work, more risk, more trouble
- Filtration must be tailored to the hop expression desired
- Time & temperature threaten the spirit that inhabits a fresh beer: hop aroma