



The Compleat Meadmaker: Home Production of Honey Wine from Your First Batch to Award- Winning Fruit and Herb Variations

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"As one of the most ancient of human beverages, mead arose in part because it was easy to make. Today's hobbyists rediscover the simplicity of making mead while reveling in the range of flavors that can result. In The Compleat Meadmaker, veteran beverage hobbyist Ken Schramm introduces the novice to the wonders of mead. With easy-to-follow procedures and simple recipes, he shows how you can quickly and painlessly make your own mead at home. In later chapters he introduces flavorful variations on the basic theme that lead to mead flavored with spice, fruits, grapes and even malt."

-- from the book's back cover

The Compleat Meadmaker: Home Production of Honey Wine from Your First Batch to Award-Winning Fruit and Herb Variations Details

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From Reader Review The Compleat Meadmaker: Home Production of Honey Wine from Your First Batch to Award-Winning Fruit and Herb Variations for online ebook

Rob says

If you've never made mead before, this will get you into your first batch (and beyond!) with confidence. If you (like me) muddled through your first couple of batches with... marginal success, this will help get you over the hump from good to great mead.

Schramm demystifies the art of mead-making while still acknowledging that a lot of magic happens down in there with the yeast and the molecules of sugar.

Best of all, he has some great go-to reference material for questions like how much fruit to add, or which varietal of grape for what specific character in your piment.

Mike says

This is the definitive book on mead. I read a few others before getting to this one, and this was the most informative, practical and readable. I read it front to back. There's a great section on the lifecycle of the yeast during the fermentation process. It's not only interesting but provides practical methods to nurture the natural process. There's not a lot of recipes but additional sections on honey, fruit, spices and other ingredients provide the background necessary to experiment and craft personal recipes. As a backyard orchardist, I enjoyed the section on fruit and fruit varietals, with emphasis given to apple varieties for cyser, and grapes for piment. Schramm pulls back the curtain a bit on the practices and theory of winemaking, which, of course, meadmaking shares an affinity. People coming from the beer brewing side of things will find themselves in familiar territory in the section on braggot. So while I come at the hobby from a gardening and beekeeping angle, this book successfully anticipates and balances the wide variety of interests that might draw people to meadmaking.

Martin says

Unfortunately no mention of staggered nutrient additions, perhaps that technique came after this book's time? If that had been included it would have rated five stars.

Roslyn says

*This book was given to me. I doubt I would have bought it.

I liked Ken's writing style, but this book lacks everything in terms of mead making and beer making in a traditional or fun or free or easy or... Sacred and Herbal Healing Beers was just so much better. Fermenting honey is effortless. You don't need PH's or three types of yeast or even one type of yeast. If this had been my first go at mead making I would have quit right there and never made mead. Very glad I started with Sacred

and Herbal Healing beers. Not sure I will ever go to the lengths this book wants me to go to--sterilizing everything all the time, buying all that fancy equipment when I know how easy it can be. I make beer out of everything--I make traditionally fermented root beer and ginger beer and lemon beer and apple beer and yes, honey beer and it's fun, and I make 5 bottles at a time because I like to play with flavors. I have zero equipment except for my rotating 24 bottles that always have something fermenting at a time. Maybe one day I will want to make 5 gallon batches and get a real operation going but right now I make enough for me and my husband and our son so... why go to all this trouble?

What bugs me about this book--the reason it gets 2 stars--is that Ken is a very authoritative writer, but he doesn't even touch on the other way to make mead. The way it was made all the along. It's like the easy way doesn't even exist. Yet he promotes this book to the WAPF association. This book was not written by someone who has any comprehension of the WAPF diet. Ken is the opposite of a WAPFer. We're raw milk and he's pasteurized. So this may be a good book for people who eat the standard American diet and like good sterile micro-brews but it should not be promoted to WAPFers who love their bacteria and don't need a single piece of fancy equipment to ferment something.

Matt Fimbulwinter says

I now know how to make mead. First batches are going into the fermenter tonight.

I found the history sections a little off, based on what I have read elsewhere, but the info on mead and honey is quite thorough. I hope to not need the parts on how to fix mead when it goes wrong, but I expect I will be glad it's there later.

Schramm's writing is light enough that despite being a book on yeast and honey, I did snicker quite a few times while reading it.

Assuming the recipes and techniques do translate into something drinkable, I'd recommend this book for those who want to make mead.

Also, I'm totally calling this my non-fiction for this cycle.

SterlingSpider says

I rather liked this book. It was very straight forward and leaning a bit heavier towards technique, but with enough recipes/examples to illustrate and inspire (a balance I've definitely come to appreciate in any instructional text). Enough science to further my understanding of the subject without making me bemoan my lack of an Organic Chem course during college, and a whole lot of flexibility. It's nice to read a book that runs the gamut of instruction from "as long as your equipment is sanitized and your ingredients quality you'll probably be fine" to "these are the most common ways to tweak the ph/gravity/sugar content/anything you can think of to tweak in a mead recipe". In the end I think the best judge of an instructional book is if reading it makes me start a mental wishlist of what to buy the next time I play with that specific hobby, and I've already started working out the contents of my next brewstore order.

Adam Gutschenritter says

Always enjoy reading brewing books, this one gives a great overview of both the brewing process for mead, one in which enough is given that I feel comfortable giving it a try, and of the expansion of mead brewing with fruit and spices as well as basics of Braggot (Mead with Malt) which caught my eye as exciting.

John says

A fantastic resource that isn't a dry read. I look forward to using it in the years to come as a refresher and I've already got my first 1 gallon batch fermenting!

Hershel Shipman says

Excellent resource. The author covers everything from honey quality, methods, history to sample recipes. The sections on types of honey, mead types and their "adjuncts" (sorry I am a brewer) are helpful to any beginner. His sense of humor though is a bit odd.

Meads can be a bit pricey to make though.

Christopher Murtagh says

A magnificent book, if you make mead buy this book.

Geoff Young says

Impressive tome featuring thorough discussions of meadmaking history, process, ingredients, and recipes. Informative and enjoyable.

Stuart says

Ken has one hell of a sweet tooth. I picked this book up as I am giving a talk on meadmaking next month and wanted to read the modern foundational text for the practice to round out the weird technical knowledge I've picked up over the years.

I've produced fermented beverages as a hobby and professionally for seven and a half years now, and I am somewhat shocked that virtually every recipe in an introductory book about meadmaking has an original gravity above 1.08--meaning every mead, pyment, cyser, melomel, metheglyn and braggot in this book comes in somewhere north of 8%ABV, oftentimes north of 11%.

My problems with this are two-fold: First, any mead made at the strength indicated would need north of 6

months of aging, often much longer (this is alluded to several times in the text), which is total bullshit. Hobby fermentation, at the beginning, should be entirely about rapid prototyping--learn the basics, try something out, see if it's good, iterate on what you learned. Making products that are only palatable after half a damn year (at a minimum!) is not only discouraging, it makes learning good habits (note taking, sanitation, etc) more difficult. Second, high ABV honey wines are incredibly expensive to produce. There's no bummer quite like dumping several hundred dollars of poorly fermented product and while the experienced homebrewer/meadmaker/whatever might shrug and laugh it off, a first-timer is just as likely to ditch the hobby entirely.

His technique is good and he's got lots of excellent information on fruit and spices, but the overall book is kinda pubey and dives into evolutionary psychology here and there. Also the sweet tooth thing is real, homeboy really, really, really likes sizzurp.

It's the 21st century, read a bunch of forum posts from broke people about making fast-clearing, low-ABV meads (or melomels, etc) and if you like what you make consider snagging this one from the library.

D'Argo Agathon says

Unbelievable amount of knowledge, from beekeeping and the chemical properties of honey to recipes for mead and suggestions. Hugely recommended, even for just beer makers.

MunMan says

I have one carboy clearing and one happily bubbling away.

A perfect introduction to making your own mead. From the history of mead to necessary equipment to mead varieties and recipes, this book will have you making mead within the week. Schramm also adds some personality here and there to keep it an interesting read.

If your interesting in making your own mead at all this book is an excellent place to start.

Guilherme Passos says

As leveduras não utilizam oxigênio para produção de energia, afinal de contas, são fermentadores, mas afinal, por que se deve oxigenar a mistura antes de armazenar para a fermentação? Abelhas colhem o néctar apenas de flores? O hidromel é mesmo a bebida mais antiga do mundo e se sim, o que pode provar isso? Como funciona o processo de produção do mel pelas abelhas e como ocorre a fermentação do mel misturado a água? Essas e outras perguntas você consegue responder lendo esse divertido livro.

Essa foi minha primeira obra em inglês e confesso que tive uma dificuldade maior do que eu esperava, talvez deixei passar muita coisa, mas me pareceu o suficiente.

O livro, como todo bom livro de faça-você-mesmo (DIY), tenta te incentivar a colocar a mão na massa antes de partir pra teoria. Então antes de você entender muito bem os conceitos, o autor te desafia a fazer seu primeiro hidromel (coisa que fiz, embora não seja o primeiro, e espero provar ainda esse ano) logo nos

primeiros capítulos, após te introduzir muito bem a história dessa bebida dourada, apreciada por deuses e servos por milhares de anos.

Há muito aprofundamento e detalhamento de processos, seja culinários e/ou químicos. As explicações químicas e biológicas do livro são muito boas, até me perguntei se o autor é bioquímico ou coisa do tipo, não pesquisei, mas provavelmente seja um grande entusiasta apenas. E esse aprofundamento teórico pode ser ignorado e ir direto para as partes empíricas, mas eu não recomendo, há muita boa informação ali.

A propósito, o livro é muito bem referenciado e as fontes, pelo menos as que tive o interesse de pesquisar, são sérias e pertinentes. Ele tenta embasar tudo o que diz e brinca muitas vezes com esse fato, afinal de contas, o hidromel costuma ser associado a certo misticismo, mas é uma bebida como qualquer outra e merece uma seriedade e uma boa pesquisa.

Esperava por mais receitas, na verdade isso era o que eu mais esperava, mas o autor te incentiva o leitor a ter autonomia e ser ousado em criar suas próprias receitas, afinal, essa é a essência da bebida artesanal. Dessa forma, ele te dá a base e o resto da construção é por sua conta, então não espere sair desse livro como um expert, em minha humilde opinião, dificilmente alguém se torna expert em coisas envolvendo o paladar, o que me agrada é diferente do que te agrada.

Então é isso. Se você quer entrar na jornada para se tornar um mestre hidromeleiro, criar o elixir dos deuses, o néctar, o "mead", a bebida dos guerreiros, esse é o livro!
