CRAFTING A HEAVENLY BREW

by John Lavenburg

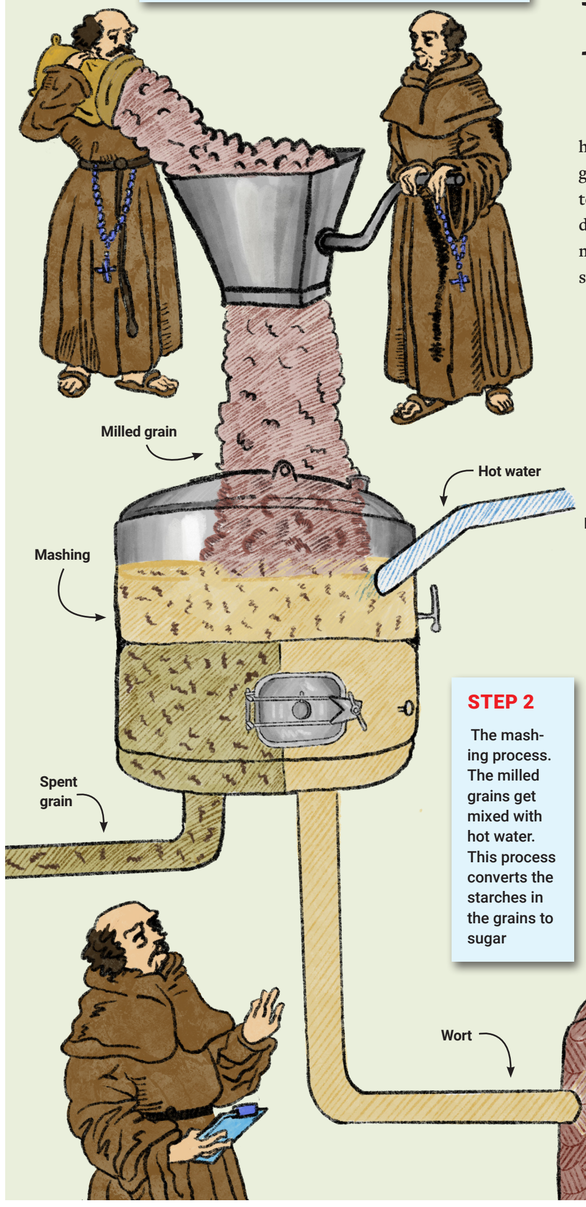
WILKES-BARRE, Pennsylvania — The National Institutes of Health estimates beer has been brewed worldwide for 10,000 years. Over that time the process and main ingredients to make a brew, at their core, have largely gone unchanged. The difference today is the technology available to brewers to experiment — there are now over 100 distinct styles of beer — and to speed up the process to mass-produce it. While there are many nuances, in its simplest form the beer-making process can be distilled down to six steps. Those six steps are described below.

Chris Miller, brewer and co-owner of Breaker Brewing Company in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, prepares to open a mash tun to remove grains left over after the liquid was transferred to a boil kettle. Breaker always donates the grains to a local farmer, who feeds them to his cattle. (Photos: John Lavenburg)

Chris Miller, brewer and co-owner of Breaker Brewing Company in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, adds yeast to a fermenter, where it will ferment anywhere from seven to 10 days.

STEP 1

Mill the grains. This first step is crucial to the process. The goal is to reduce the kernels into finer particles for mashing.



STEP 2

The mashing process. The milled grains get mixed with hot water. This process converts the starches in the grains to sugar

STEP 3

The liquid is slowly transferred from the bottom of the mash tun over to the boil kettle, leaving all of the grains behind. The liquid then boils for about an hour, and the hops are added along the way.

STEP 4

The liquid is then brought down to the chiller, where it will go from a boil down to about 68 degrees. Once it reaches the desired temperature it is transferred to the fermenter.

STEP 5

The yeast is added and it ferments anywhere from seven to 10 days. When that's done the temperature is again dropped to get all of the yeast out. It's then transferred to the brite tank.

STEP 6

The beer is carbonated in the brite tank. From there, the beer is canned or kegged.