

## Put a Ring on It

by Andi Peterson Brown

The early taste of winter weather that we had last week got me to thinking. And not about cozy nights in front of the fireplace or steaming mugs of hot chocolate. As a Realtor, it's hard for me to get anything house-related off my mind, and so as I sat at my desk and watched the rain come down, the first thing I thought of was...deferred maintenance. Yes, I see a little rain and I immediately think about clogged gutters, missing flashing, leaking pipes—you name it.

And it got me to thinking about a good friend of mine who shared with me a recent experience. A few years ago he discovered that one of the toilets in his home had been installed incorrectly and was missing a wax ring to prevent water from leaking between the toilet and the drain pipe. He had every intention of fixing it, but then life got in the way, the bathroom was seldom used, and it became out of sight and out of mind. "All of a sudden" he noticed one day that the floor was uneven and the grout was a rusty red. He called in a contractor who discovered that the entire subfloor beneath the tile was water-damaged, complete with a watermelon-sized rotting hole. And the culprit? That darn missing wax ring.

Needless to say, he is now replacing his entire bathroom. While he is excited about the prospect of updating the 1982 décor, the remodel is going to cost a wee bit more than that five dollar wax ring. The lesson? While it might be time-consuming and somewhat costly to take care of home maintenance issues as they occur, deferring that maintenance will only end up costing more.



andi  
PETERSON  
BROWN

Real Estate Broker  
AndiBrownHomes.com  
925.818.4588



DRE# 01738605

real local • real knowledge • real value

## Local Home Brewers

...continued from page D1



Mike Bernhardt with his modified refrigerator Photo Cathy Tyson

Feddersen brews approximately ten to twelve times a year, usually in five gallon batches, which translates to about fifty beers per batch. With his current system, the maximum he can make is ten gallons. He adds, "If I had more time, I would brew more often. Depending on parties or events, I often run out of beer before my next creation is ready."

Look for Feddersen at the Bay Area Craft Beer Festival in Martinez on October 22. He will be pouring his Chocolate Oatmeal Stout, with Guinness-like nitrogen gas. There will be about eight home brewers from DOZE who will have their beverages available to try at their booth, in addition to an expected thirty commercial breweries pouring their beers.

**For Mike Bernhardt of Moraga**, his love of home brewing started with a brewing kit he received as a birthday present from his wife, Yvonne Lefort, just a couple of years ago. As his interest grew, so did the array of equipment in the garage – now they have a separate stand-alone freezer, a second fridge that has been tricked out with taps in the door, and an outdoor propane powered turkey fryer that has the necessary juice to get the beer cooking and kegs ready for sampling, not to mention a small capping machine and bottle sanitation equipment.

Despite a slightly messy setback on his first batch – an "issue" during fermentation – he's definitely hooked on Zy-murgy. Wife Yvonne says that with a new avocation he goes

in deep and quickly ascends the learning curve. At the very first competition he entered earlier this month, his Vienna Lager won first place in its category at the Oakland Dimond District's Oaktobefest. "I'm trying really hard to keep enough to share with guests" for an Oaktobefest get-together later this month.

When asked if there are any aspects of his day job that help in the beer making process, Bernhardt responded, "I'm a Senior Network Engineer with BART. I'd say that the ability to soak up knowledge, and to analyze and troubleshoot problems probably helps me to keep improving my brewing. There are a surprising number of home brewers who are in IT, at least in the Bay Area. I don't know if that's because of work skills or because they really need beer when they get home."

Like having the latest golf club, the "gadget factor" can be appealing to hobbyists. For Bernhardt, moderation is the key, "I've learned what will make a big difference and balanced that with my commitment and what I'm willing to invest in it."



Boiling a yeast starter

Photo Troy Feddersen