Tonight’s log is less about the food tonight than about finally getting my cameras to cooperate with me. In order to get the results I want from the Nikon Digital D300 I need to use a moderate to high f-stop (between 7.1 and 11, for good depth of field), a fast shutter speed (to deal with heat shimmy from the grill) and a low ISO (to reduce grain). This is just more than the built-in flash on the D300 can handle. Sometimes, with a Nikon SB-800 speed light mounted on the D300, everything works perfectly and I get exactly what I want, as seen in the first picture, below.

Sometimes the camera simply refuses to synch with the speed light and although the flash fires what I get looks more like the following.
So, at least for today, I went back to my old D2X. Yeah, it weighs like a brick. But everything works together perfectly. Tonight’s dinner was another Duroc pork chop from Main Line Prime, with a dry Jamaican Jerk rub. The chop sat for 12 hours in Remy VS, then got a thick dusting of the Jerk rub. It’s smoked over hickory and whole allspice berries. It looked fine, it smelled fine as it began to smoke, and after the cognac it probably felt fine too. It looked even better as it began to crisp up. The first and third shot of the following shots were taken with the D2X; the second was taken with the D300. The shot with D300 may be the best, but the D300 mostly just produced black-on-black empties because, mostly, the D 300 and the flash refused to synch. After enough misfires I just gave up and switched back to the D2X.
It really seemed silly to waste all the wonderful clouds of allspice smoke that were coming off the grill. I led a Wharton Brewmasters Guild trip to Victory brewing on Friday and am now well endowed with some pretty lovely pizzas that I bought on the way out, so I decided to see how a couple of slices of pizza smoked up. More importantly, I wanted to see how the Nikon D2X handled the forced combination of slow lens, high f-stop, low ISO, and fast shutter speed.

And yes, I was pleased with the pictures. Now I wanted to see what kind of shots I could get with a wide-angle lens. Again, the depth of field is fine, the color is fine even with a wide angle, and the distortion is minimal. The trick is going with the camera that lets me force it to do what I want, and that cooperates with a speed light strobe powerful enough to deal with my combination of f-stop, shutter speed, and ISO setting. Yes, I think this works better than the shots with the D300. Sadly, there is a difference even between a high-end consumer camera and a professional photojournalist camera. Pity ... because the consumer camera is cheaper and weighs a lot less!
We came back from the brewery with a huge batch of Trice Fries, fried sweet potatoes, fried battered potatoes, and fried leeks. What a pretty plate, and nicely set off with a salad and a growler of beer.
Since we had just gotten back from Victory I also had a growler of Yakima Twilight. The brewmaster joked that he brewed this beer precisely to my specifications, which is not quite true. But if he had brewed it to my specifications nothing about the beer would have been different; I think it’s perfect. It’s a dark American IPA ... a double oxymoron. How can an India Pale Ale be dark? And, given that an India Pale Ale was brewed in Britain (more precisely, in Burton on Trent) to be shipped to India when India was still part of the British Empire, how can it use American and not British hops? No matter; this is wonderful, with rich, sweet, caramel malt flavors and citrus American Pacific North West hopping, wonderful nose, wonderful palate, perfect balance, and a long, long bitter finish.

But what was the broccoli for? As you can tell from the final picture, I’m still not sure.

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