

Blanche Des Honnelles

This beer surprised me when I first had it. But it is an interesting beer, and definitely tasty. So figured it would go well in our beer packs.

From the pour, it wasn't what I expected - much darker in colour, with a more subdued body than typical for witbiers.

The aroma is also subdued, being much more malty and slightly fruity, than the traditional mix of citrus, banana and clove.

The flavour follows suit, with first taste being the sweet bready malt, a bit like banana bread; without the strong aromatic. The mouthfeel is really quite smooth, and heavier than expected, with the continued peach and honey sweetness.

But the beer is not cloying. It seems to dry out well as it progresses, leaving hints of lingering spice. The alcohol is barely noticeable.

The beer has been brewed since 1991. It has barley, wheat and oats which accounts for the maltier body and creamier mouthfeel.

I found the beer intriguingly moreish throughout. It doesn't fit in any style box, but with the malty body, and still nature, it hinted at a baby barley wine for me!

Style: Double Witbier
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Abbaye des Rocs
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0%



Prearis Blond

This is our third beer from the Prearis range, the brewer who was awarded 'Best Hobby Brewer' in 2011, and then voted Ratebeer's 'Best New Belgian Brewer 2013'.

It pours a hazy blond colour, with a thick, creamy head. The aroma is of typical Belgian yeast, bready malts and herbal, grassy hops.

There is an initial sweetness of tropical fruits and a little caramel malt. The hops join in quickly to lift the palette with a fresh grassy and slightly earthy flavour. As the flavour progresses, the beer dries out to leave a pleasant, ever so slightly sour, bitter finish.

More awards: they keep coming for the little microbrewery, seeing their Quadrocinno voted third best beer at the 2014 Zythos festival. It is a 10% Belgian-style quad, with chocolate and coffee!

Style: Blond
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Vliegende Paard Brouwers
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0%

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De Molen Vuur & Vlam

We welcome our newest brewery to our wholesale portfolio – Brouwerij De Molen from The Netherlands. Included in Ratebeer's 'Top 100 Brewers of the World' last year, we can look forward to some world class brews in coming months.

First cab off the rank is their famous Vuur & Vlam (Fire & Flames).

Each year, De Molen organises a beer festival called 'Borefts', where they invite a handful of similar artisanal brewers from Europe to share their favourite beers. In 2010, they shared their recipe to this beer with the invitees, who all made their own version of the beer.

(Members may recall De Struise's Ignis & Flamma from the Nov 2014 beer pack!)

The beer is a delicious American-style IPA. Very hop-driven with Galena for bittering, late hopping with Chinook, Cascade, Simcoe and Amarillo and also dry-hopped with Cascade.

But for all the fruity and resinous hop flavours, there is a lovely balance with a caramel malt body to carry the bitterness.



Style: IPA

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.2%

Alvinne Balthazar

Another beer from the boys at Alvinne, and typically it is hard to put this beer in a style box. Balthazar is essentially a strong amber ale with spices.

It pours a hazy amber colour, with a tan head. The aroma is of sweet fruits, caramel malts and spices. Almost like a fruit cake.

The fruit and malt sweetness is first noticed in the form of caramel and toffee. The spicing with ginger, coriander and cardamom adds a layer of flavour to explore.

The dark fruit sweetness has a slight sourness to it as well; hinting at a soft Oud Bruin style beer. The alcohol provides a warmth to the slightly tart aftertaste.

Style: Belgian Strong Dark Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Picobrouwerij Alvinne

Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.0%



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Zundert Trappist

Zundert was the 9th official Authentic Trappist Monastery, located in the town of Zundert (funnily enough) in The Netherlands.

The Monastery was founded in 1899 by monks from the Koeningshoeven (La Trappe) Monastery, also in The Netherlands. It took some time for the monastery to commence brewing operations though, with the brewery officially opened on 6th December 2013.

They currently produce just one style of beer. Zundert is a classic Belgian tripel style. It pours a lovely amber colour, and has all the hallmark tripel aromas – orange citrus, melon, caramel malt, light spices and of course the typical Belgian yeast characteristics.

The beer is slightly heavier in body, with an early sticky fruit sweetness. The combination of citrus and light peppery spice lighten the mouthfeel as the beer progresses.



Style: Tripel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Trappistenbrouwerij De Kievit
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0%

Gordon Xmas Ale

Belgium (and Europe in general) has a strong tradition of Christmas beers ('Kerstebiers' in Flemish). Many breweries have a winter seasonal offering but the Anthony Martin group claim that it was Gordon Xmas Ale that started this tradition.

Whoever was responsible, they can take great credit for the tradition of delicious dark, spicy brews that are eagerly anticipated as the temperatures drop and the European winter closes in.

Gordon Xmas Ale is a dark red beer with a thick creamy head. The nose is an inviting mix of dark ripe stone fruit, caramel malt and spices of clove, nutmeg, cinnamon and coriander.

A full-bodied beer with a rich fruity malt sweetness, yet a light mouthfeel sharpened by the hops and spices. The alcohol provides a real warmth to the lingering aftertaste.

Sit back in a comfy chair, by the fireplace, and allow this beer to warm a little to fully appreciate all it has to offer.

Style: Kerstebier
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Palm Corporation (for Anthony Martin)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.8%



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