

De Molen Pale Ale Citra

The first thing to note about this beer is that its a single hop beer featuring the Citra hop.

Single hop beers make for an interesting study in the character of a particular hop, but it doesn't always work to have one hop doing the very different tasks of bittering, flavour and aroma.

I've tried a couple of Citra single hop beers before; most notably 'Citra' by Oakham Ales in the UK. And this beer by De Molen is another example of a Citra single hop that works.

The beer is made as an American Pale Ale. The Citra character comes through strong in the aroma, with citrus and tropical fruits.

These flavours follow through in the taste as well, though it is not an overly bitter beer. It has a very light mouthfeel, and is a very easy drinking beer. A perfect session ale, and the reason it is one of De Molen's best selling lower alcohol styles.

This is the last batch of this beer under the 'Pale Ale Citra' label. It is now known as 'Hop & Liefde', which translates to Hop and Love.

Style: American Pale Ale
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.8%



Crime Passionnel

This is one of the new brews from Ronald at Dochter van de Korenaar.

Typically for this brewery, it is a beer that doesn't really fall into any established style category. As described by the brewer, it is an 'internationally styled wheat India Pale Ale!'

It pours a glowing orange, and gives off a tropical fruit aroma of mango, grapefruit, pineapple. There is also a definite malt component.

The wheat gives this beer a smooth, light and crisp mouthfeel. The tropical fruit flavours are strong, for an early sweetness. But it doesn't take long for the hop bitterness to join in. Citrus and grassy hop bitterness balances nicely against the tropical fruit sweetness. The beer finishes dry, with a lingering bitterness.

More awards: *Zyθος is an annual beer festival held especially for the smaller breweries, and an event where breweries often debut new beers or present experimental brews. Crime Passionnel was voted 'Number 1 Beer of Zyθος Festival' in 2014.*

Style: Belgian Wheat IPA
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij De Dochter van de Korenaar
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5%



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Duvel Tripel Hop 2015 (Equinox)

This is a beer we look forward to every year. Once a year, an extra hop is added to the iconic Duvel beer; and the featured hop is changed from year to year. For 2015 it is the Equinox hop from the US.

The additional hop is added to the traditional Saaz-Saaz and Styrian Golding hops, both in the making of the beer and also dry-hopping.

I didn't know a lot about the Equinox hop, but a little investigation suggested a 'pronounced aroma profile with citrus, tropical fruit, floral and herbal characteristics'. Specific descriptors include lemon, lime, papaya, apple and green pepper. Sounds great!

It is an enjoyable creation, very much in the mold of previous years – Mosaic (2014), Sorachi Ace (2013), Citra (2012). Lots of citrus and tropical fruit flavours and aroma. Remarkably light mouthfeel for a beer of 9.5%, and one that is way too easy to drink!

I think this year's version is very similar to last year's Mosaic hop. I still prefer the 2012 Citra version, but definitely enjoyed this one. It is only available once, so enjoy it while it lasts.



Style: Belgian IPA
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Duvel-Moortgat
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.5%

Sint Canarus Tripel

One of my favourite places to visit in Belgium is Brouwerij Sint Canarus. Dr Canarus proudly proclaims his brewery as the biggest and best in Gotten. It is a small village in the country side, so while it doesn't have a lot of competition for title, it is one of the most beautiful for sure.

Tripels are to Belgian brewers what a Pale Ale is to Australian craft breweries. A tripel is the first style most brewers produce, and the work horse which both generates an income and helps establish the brewery in the market place.

The Sint Canarus Tripel is the flagship beer for Dr Canarus. Walk into his brewery bar on a Sunday morning, and this is the beer you will be greeted with; along with a big smile and a story that takes a little consideration as to it being fact or fiction.

The beer is a golden colour, with a sturdy white foam. A full aroma of tropical fruits and Belgian yeast, prepares you for a beer with nice balance between sweet, spice and bitterness, and a dry finish.



Style: Tripel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Sint Canarus
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5%

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Gauloise Christmas 2014

Brasserie Du Bocq was founded in 1858 by brewer Martin Belot. 'Gauloise' was the first beer he produced, paying tribute to the Gallic brewing know-how.

The Christmas seasonal is ruby red colour with a lively head of fine bubbles. The aroma is full of sweet dark fruit notes, with a sherry hint and some slight spicing.

It is very much like a Belgian dubbel, with the addition of some spicing. Dangerously easy to drink, it has a sweet malty body which seems balanced by the gentle spices with cinnamon and a touch of licorice. It is sweet without being cloying.

The beer has previously been known as 'Bocq Christmas' and 'Regal Christmas', before being incorporated under the 'Gauloise' label.



Style: Kerstebier
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brasserie Du Bocq
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.1%

Emelisse Winterbier

On a chilly night in, settle by the fireplace and grab this bottle of Emelisse Winterbier for company.

It isn't the prettiest looking beer in the glass, having a murky brown body. But don't judge a book by its cover.

The aroma is sweet, fruity and spiced. Caramel, raisins, candi sugar, molasses give a sweetness to the dark roasty malts.

The sweetness presents early as an invitation to enjoy the layers of flavours to come. As the beer warms, the full range of flavours develop. Sweet caramel roasted malts and over-ripe stone fruit is joined by burned toffee, licorice, a nuttiness and peppery spice.

The beer finishes quite dry, with a long spicy, bitter aftertaste. Definitely a beer to sip and savour.

Style: Winterbier
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Bierbrouwerij Grand Café Emelisse
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.2%



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