

De Molen Op & Top

'On Top & The Best' seems a good name for De Molen's session ale. It is an ale – rather than a lager – with a top-fermenting yeast.

The beer is put in the 'English-style Bitter' box, but the hop profile could definitely nudge it toward an IPA.

As is customary for De Molen, the bittering hop is Sladek. And their penchant for dry-hopping continues in this beer, with Amarillo being the chosen weapon from the hop arsenal.

The beer has an attractive orange body, with a fluffy white head. The Amarillo dry hop gives an immediately enticing aroma of grapefruit and tangerine.

It is an easy-drinking bitter, with a light, zesty and very clean mouthfeel. The beer is slightly fruity and bitter, drying out as it goes, to a pleasant and refreshing lingering bitterness.



Style: Bitter

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.5%

Stouterik

Brasserie De La Senne are the 'other' Brussels brewery – Cantillon being the most well-known of course.

The two brewers behind De La Senne are proud Brussels natives, and equally proud of Belgium's rich brewing tradition. They produce beers that are traditionally Belgian by nature, though sometimes borrowing influences from different brewing cultures when it fits.

The beers are generally lower in alcohol than most of the Belgian beers we see. And all their beers are heavily hopped.

Stouterik is 'The Brussels Stout'. Roasted malt and unmalted roasted barley create a dark body. There is a little dried fruit sweetness early on, giving way to a roasty, chocolate malt body with a hint of roasted nuts.

The beer is very dry, in the style of an Irish Dry Stout. And of course there is a strong hop presence for a strong bitterness. For such a low ABV beer, there is a lot of complexity and loads of flavour to enjoy.



Style: Belgian Stout

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie De La Senne

Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.5%

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De Dolle Arabier

The brewery name translates to 'The Mad Brewers', and meeting brewer Kris Herteleer you do notice he is slightly eccentric. (I wish I had a picture to share of the bright blue and speckled pastel shoes he was wearing during our recent visit to the brewery!)

Arabier is one of the two main beers from De Dolle (the other being Oerbier). It is a Belgian Pale Ale, but is really so much more.

A golden yellow body supports a billowing white head (beware – you will need to pour this beer carefully). Typical Belgian yeast aromas come pouring out of the glass, along with earthy hops.

It is a heavily-hopped beer (65 IBU), with dry-hopping using flower Nugget hops from nearby Poperinge. The high carbonation is something brewer Kris believes helps make this beer special.

Lovely citrus and tropical fruits, clean, crisp malt backbone, strong hop bitterness and a little undercurrent of something in the background that is attributed to the open copper koelschip; which is a step in the production of all De Dolle's beers.

Style: Belgian Pale Ale
Country: Belgium
Brewer: De Dolle Brouwers
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0%



Kasteelbier Rouge

Brouwerij van Honsebrouck is one of the larger independent breweries in Belgium. Still a family-owned business, it has origins dating back to 1811, and is now being controlled by the 5th generation of the family.

The brewery is in Ingelmunster, with the 'Kasteel' label commencing in 1989 following the family purchase of the magnificent Ingelmunster Castle.

The first Kasteel beer produced was the Donker, an 11% strong dark ale we featured in December 2014. The Rouge is a blend of Donker and sweet cherry liqueur.

The aroma and colour scream cherry beer. The flavour of the sweet cherries dominates the malt of the dark beer, though it is in the background lending hints of chocolate, and a little soft hop bitterness.

It is one for the sweet-tooth, and is like drinking a sweet cherry liqueur without any alcohol presence. This beer I prefer served cooler. It is a great aperitif on a hot afternoon.

Style: Fruit Beer (Sweet Cherry)
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij van Honsebrouck
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0%



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Kees Double Rye IPA

Kees Bubberman enjoys making beers that are a little bit different. The former brewmaster of the Emelisse brewery, he left to start his own brewery early in 2015.

He describes himself as a 'creative', always looking to design a new recipe, and make something interesting and fun. So it is no surprise that his double IPA has a little something extra.

The Double Rye IPA pours a hazy dark orange, with a thin head. The hop assault is powered by generous additions of Citra, Simcoe and Cascade, producing an inviting aroma.

The rye provides a nice spiciness balancing the tropical and citrus fruit sweetness. For a big beer, the body is quite light with a constant bitterness holding through and into the aftertaste.

Style: Double IPA (Rye)
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Kees
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5%



Alvinne Land Van Mortagne

For the past few years, the Alvinne Brewery has been known for their amazing range of sour and barrel-aged beers. They attribute much of their success to their in-house Morpheus yeast.

Yeast is the treasure of most breweries, with the traditional breweries cultivating their house yeast over decades. It is very uncommon for a new small brewery to have their own yeast.

Without getting too technical, Morpheus yeast can be used to brew both traditional fermentation ales, and also mixed fermentation for sour beers. And this at high alcohol volumes as well. It is pretty amazing.

Land Van Mortagne is a traditional quadruple style. The beer is full of dried stone fruits, caramel, brown sugar and a touch of chocolate. There is a little sour cherry tartness, as well as a little spicy hop bite.

A really enjoyable beer, and one which highlights the flexibility of the very special Morpheus yeast.

Style: Quadrupel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Picobrouwerij Alvinne
Alcohol Content (ABV): 12.9%



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