

## Brugse Zot Blond

De Halve Maan (The Half Moon) brewery has long been championed as the last remaining production brewery inside the city walls of Brugse. This family brewery, with a typically long and interesting history is a must-visit on a trip to Brugse.

The brewery tour takes in the old brewery, with much of the past equipment placed strategically on route. While the tour is undoubtedly interesting, it is the tasting room that participants look forward to most.

Brugse Zot Blond is the house beer – a reward for finding your way through the brewery maze. It is fair reward too, as this beer has received many international accolades over the years.

A delicious blond ale, brewed with four different malts and two aromatic hop varieties. It makes for a lovely balance of citrus fruit, malt and a little spiciness in the yeast. Could we deem this a great (Belgian) session beer??



**Style: Belgian Blond**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij De Halve Maan**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0%**

## Gentse Strop



From Brugse to Ghent, and a tasty little beer from Brewery Roman.

This family brewery has its history dating back to 1545, just a few years after the 1539 uprising by the citizens of Ghent against Emperor Charles V.

The rebellion was ended without bloodshed, when Charles marched his army into Ghent the following year. The lookout was reportedly drunk from beer, so didn't notice the army advancing.

As punishment, Charles had the leaders paraded through the city wearing nooses around their necks. Citizens of Ghent were given the nickname 'noose bearers', which they wear nowadays as a badge of honour. This beer owes its name to the proud citizens of Ghent – the 'Gentenaars' – and translates as Ghent 'sling carriers'.

The beer was first released in 2011, to mark the start of the annual Ghent Festival. It is a blond ale, with strong yeast aroma, citrus and crisp malt. The beer is very dry, with lemon citrus and a clean malt profile.

**Style: Belgian Speciale**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij Roman**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.9%**

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## Struise Rosse

Something a little different from De Struise is the Struise Rosse. It pours quite a dark, hazy amber colour with a small head that quickly disappears. It has quite a sweet woody aroma of malts and a little Belgian candi sugar.

There is a lot more to this beer than is immediately evident. The beer is not as sweet as the nose suggests. A big mouthful of sweet malts, caramel and raisins greets the front palette. There is a woody or nutty aspect, and an earthy hop character.

The beer dries out quickly, and finishes with a lingering bitterness and even a slight tartness from somewhere.

There is a rumour that this beer was the result of a brewing mistake. If that is the case, it was one that happily worked out well as this beer has been replicated each year since 2007.

**Style: Belgian Amber Ale**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: De Struise Brouwers**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0%**



## De La Senne Brusselleir

For those who recognize Brasserie De La Senne, you'll know this is quite a big beer for them. They tend to concentrate on lower alcohol, sessionable beers. But it would be a short session on this tasty black IPA.

De La Senne is the second brewery in Brussels (Cantillon being the first). It began operations on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010, and has prided itself on becoming the locals brewery.

Two Brussels locals, the brewers look after their Brussels market first. They don't export a lot of their beer, so we are fortunate to try this one. All the beers are very traditional in that they are not pasturised or filtered, and use only natural ingredients.

The beer has a deep roasted malt character, with hints of bitter chocolate. But the solid hopping, that is a trademark of this brewery, is not overpowered. The earthy bitterness and medium carbonation make for a beer that is lighter in body than you might imagine; and very drinkable.

**Style: Black IPA**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Brasserie De La Senne**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0%**



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## De Molen Heen & Weer

De Molen is most well known for the big dark ales, and also the lighter pale ales and IPA's. But a great brewer can turn their hand to any style. Heen ('ee' is pronounced 'a', as in hate) & Weer translates as 'Back & Forth', and is De Molen's take on a Belgian Tripel style.

The Belgian yeast aromas are present, but there is also a big malt sweetness as some peppery spice.

This follows through in the flavour. An initial sweet malt hit offers brown sugar, ripe fruits and an alcohol warmth. Then the bitterness works to balance the sweetness, much higher than a normal tripel. Coriander and a little peppery bite aid the hop bite to produce a lingering bitter, spicy finish.

De Molen always describe their beer styles as '-ish', acknowledging each beer is their interpretation. Having sampled many Belgian Tripels, this one is a little different, but an interesting and enjoyable beer all the same.

**Style: Tripel**

**Country: The Netherlands**

**Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.5%**



## Emelisse Imperial Dopplebock

It has been a while since we've had a beer from Emelisse, but let me assure you it has been worth the wait.

Doppelbocks are a style I really enjoy, and when a great brewer makes a supercharged version, it is something to get excited about.

As with many big malty beers, fresh is not best. Often the beer tastes a little too fresh and unbalanced, but time will soften things down and bring all the attributes together. We've been sitting on these since last year, and they are now tasting great.

This is a malt bomb, so lots of sweet caramel and burnt sugar in the aroma. Also some dried stonefruit and a hint of madeira.

Big sweetness up front with caramel, molasses, toffee, raisins and prunes. There is a soft hop bite lingering somewhere in the background, along with some gentle spice.

The age has taken care of the early sticky mouthfeel, and it is now a good deal lighter in the body than it was. It would suit aging for longer, but how strong is your willpower??

**Style: Imperial Dopplebock**

**Country: The Netherlands**

**Brewer: Bierbrouwerij Grand Café Emelisse**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.0%**



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