

Kees Pale Ale Citra

Kees Bubberman continues to brew his tasty creations from his new facility in Middleburg, in The Netherlands. This one is perfect for the European summer, and it goes alright any time of year over here.

Pale Ale Citra is a tasty little beer of 4.6% ABV. And who isn't a fan of Citra hops? It has to be my favourite of all the hops.

For the home brewers, the beer uses Maris Otter and Cara Munich malts for a solid biscuit and caramel malt backbone. Just enough to support the big doses of Citra and Summit hops. (No – this beer is not a single hop.)

The beer is then dry-hopped with Citra to ensure it is bursting with loads of lemon citrus, fresh cut grass, tropical fruits and a little resinous pine.

The beer finishes quite dry, with a definite lingering bitterness.

Style: Pale Ale
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Kees
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.6%



John Martin's IPA

John Martin was an English brewer who took up residence in Antwerp in 1909. His grandson Anthony is now the owner of the business.

Although he set up in Belgium, John Martin's beers were very much in the British style. He first brewed a pale ale, and his second beer was the IPA. After a full rebranding in 2009, the IPA was re-released in 2012.

The hop-lovers will probably be disappointed in this beer as an IPA. Even viewed as an English style IPA, it lacks the assertive hop bitterness and aroma we've become used to for IPA's.

But taste it without the IPA-expectation, and you get a well balanced, malty ale with a background hop presence. A solid biscuity malt base, with light fruity hints and a little lingering, spicy bitterness.

Style: IPA (English Style)
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Palm Brewery (for John Martin)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.9%



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Redchurch Great Eastern IPA

The first of the Redchurch beers – the Bethnal Pale Ale – was well received, so we'll jump straight in with another.

Continuing the East End naming theme, the Great Eastern India Pale Ale pays homage to the *Great Eastern*, an historically famous iron sailing ship built in Millwall (on the Thames a couple of miles down the road from Bethnal Green). Launched in 1858, she was the largest ship ever built at the time.

Built specifically for long journeys, she was intended for travel to Australia without the need for refueling. Unfortunately damaged on her ill-fated maiden voyage, this ship never made it to Australia.

Luckily though, Redchurch's Great Eastern IPA did!

The beer greets you with a huge tropical fruit aroma. Centennial, Chinook and Columbus hops combine with all-English caramel malts to provide a crisp but sweet malt backbone which is overtaken by the assertive bitterness. A lovely light and dry IPA, that seems uncomplicated but delicious.



Style: IPA
Country: England
Brewer: The Redchurch Brewery
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.4%



Hoegaarden Grand Cru

Most beer drinkers will know Hoegaarden's famous witbier. You may even have enjoyed a few when international beers were a novelty. Since then it has suffered a decline in prestige.

So it may seem a little strange to include a Hoegaarden beer in our range. But regardless of its heritage, if it is a good beer, it is worth including. Belgian breweries use the label 'Grand Cru' for their best beer. And it is hard to argue that this label has been misapplied to this beer.

It is a little hard to classify under an established beer style. I would tend to call this beer a tripel, though the general consensus is a strong pale ale.

Whatever box it fits into, the hero of the beer is the yeast character. The aroma is full of Belgian yeast notes – loads of banana, vanilla and spice.

The beer is at first sweet, with citrus and tropical fruit and sweet bread malt. Banana, vanilla and clove are prominent, and then some hop bitterness and a peppery spice kick in. A crisp and dry finish to this beer hides the high alcohol content really well. It's a bit like a supercharged Hoegaarden witbier.

Style: Strong Pale Ale
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij van Hoegaarden (AB InBev)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5%

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Abbaye des Rocs La Montagnarde

Brasserie des Rocs is located in the picturesque little village of Montignies-sur-Roc. The inhabitants of this village are known colloquially as 'Montagnards'. It seems appropriate then that the local brewery name their supreme beer after their local residents.

And why not be kind to your locals. When the brewery is in your garage, and the tasting room is in your dining room, you need to get on with your neighbours!

The beer is noted as an amber (ambree) on the label, but would best be classed as a strong dark ale. A very broad catch-all style for anything slightly dark and fruity.

A very inviting aroma of sweet malt, over-ripe dark stone fruits with hints of banana and honey is the preview to this treat. And all of those aromas follow through in the taste, and then some.

At first a sweet malt backbone offering caramel and toasty malt, plums, raisins, brown sugar and a hint of spice. But the beer is not too sweet, with a citrus and slightly spicing yeast and hop character cutting in. It dries out on the finish, and leaves a complex aftertaste to savour.

Style: Strong Dark Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie de l'Abbaye des Rocs

Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.5%



De Molen Bloed, Zweet & Tranen



This beer from De Molen is a little outside the box. As they do, De Molen are non-committal as they describe this beer as being 'Stout and Porter-ish'. That leaves thing pretty open then!

To be a little more specific, this is a smoked stout combining English peat smoked malts and another smoked malt from Bamberg in Germany (the home of smoked malts). This unlikely combination gave rise to the name.

In the words of the brewery: "Anyone who watched Faulty Towers knows how hard it is to create a lasting peace between the English and the Germans. It cost us blood, sweat and tears but we are convinced we succeeded".

The aroma is strongly of smoked malt, even smoked meats. But allow the beer to warm and the flavour range is immense. For all the smoky malt, there is a big dose of chocolate. There is also dark berries, a woody character, something slightly vinuous as well as some hop bitterness.

There is a lot to this beer, and it may be a little divisive. But let it warm, sip through the initial palette shock, and you will find a truly interesting beer.

Style: Smoked Stout

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.2%

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