

De Molen Licht & Lustig

De Molen almost always suggest their beers are leaning to a certain style without actually proclaiming they fit firmly in that box. And the Licht & Lustig is no different, described by the brewery as 'American Pale Ale-ish'.

The intention with this beer was to create a beer light in alcohol (for their portfolio at least), with a refreshing crisp and bitter taste. A beer of which to have a few, or indeed the beer to start a tasty flight.

The beer is a bit of a cross between two distinct styles. Firstly an English style bitter with a nice malty body and high level of bitterness. And it also has elements of an American style Pale Ale, with the use of American hops.

Pils and caramel malt make for a decent malt backbone, which supports a good level of hop bitterness from the Sladek bittering hops. The beer is then dry-hopped with a mix of Columbus and Amarillo hops for a lovely aroma and flavour of fresh tropical fruits.

The name of the beer translates as 'Light and Lustful', so drink with care!

Style: Pale Ale
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.5%



Kriek des Jacobins



This beer comes from another of Belgium's old family breweries, dating back to 1892. It is now in the hands of the 5th generation of this brewing family.

Located in the west Flanders town of Bellegem, not far from the French border, this brewery forms a distinctive part of the town landscape. Formerly known as Brouwerijen Omer Vanderghinste, the name was changed to Brouwerij Bockor in 1977.

In 1970 the brewery first produced a Gueuze, and followed this up with the Kriek in 1983.

The beer is made of wheat and barley, producing a wort which is transported to open cooling vessels, then into giant wooden barrels (foeders), where the beer spontaneously ferments. Pure fresh cherry juice is added to turn this beer into a kriek (or sour cherry beer).

It isn't overly sour, with a good hit of sweetness early on and controlled acidity making for a very smooth, easy drinking but interesting beer. If you aren't a fan of sours, do give this beer a try as you may be pleasantly surprised.

Style: Kriek
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Bockor
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.5%

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Drake's IPA

This brewery hails from the city of San Leandro in California, so is the first true west coast IPA to feature in our beer packs.

The brewery began operations back in 1989, so was a part of the early US craft beer movement on the west coast. At the time, the brewery was a keg-only wholesale operation. But over time, developed into a full production facility complete with tap room and barrel aging programmes.

At first the brewery created English style beers, heavy on the malt and the earthier old world hops. But over time the styles changed to adopt the growing selection of Pacific Northwest hops.

The IPA is now the quintessential US beer. Drake's has a lovely copper Munich and Crystal malt body, balanced by generous additions of three C-hops – Centennial, Chinook and Cascade. Lots of fresh tropical fruit and dank resinous hops lead the flavour assault for this beer, which won a Bronze award at the 2004 World Beer Cup.



Style: IPA
Country: United States
Brewer: Drake's Brewing Company
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.0%

Lucifer

Belgium has a strong theme for beer names evoking thoughts of the devil and the world below. And typically they are all strong blonde ales. Duvel is undoubtedly the most well known, but Judas, Satan and Lucifer are a few others. It was the brewers way of sticking two fingers up at the church, who were espousing the evils of drinking strong beer.

Lucifer was a beer in the Liefmans portfolio, but when the brewery went bankrupt in 2008, it seemed it was the end of Lucifer. Duvel Moortgat bought the rights to all the Liefmans beers, but thought Lucifer too similar to its own Duvel to continue producing it.

Happily, the nearby Het Anker brewery negotiated an agreement to keep producing the Lucifer beer that we can enjoy today.

A glowing orange gold beer with a perfect white foam, the yeasty aroma is full of banana, citrus, clove and spice. The taste is more citrus than the aroma suggests, with just hints of tropical fruit sweetness and honey. It has a dry and lingering bitterness to the finish.

Style: Strong Blonde Ale
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Het Anker
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0%



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X-Mas Zinnebir 2014

'Zinnebir' is Brussels slang meaning '*little bastards*', and is a term applied to the young men living in the poor quarter of Brussels who have parents who speak different languages (ie. one speaks Flemish while the other speaks French).

But don't fret – there is no malicious intent in the use of the term, rather recognition by the brewers who are absolute Brussels natives, and who appreciate every aspect of Brussels life and tradition.

So it comes as no surprise that X-Mas Zinnebir is a little different to the normal Belgian Christmas seasonal offering. Rather than being a high gravity, rich boozy offering, this beer has a lighter mouthfeel and is much drier.

There is a pervading earthiness, even woodiness, to the flavour. As with all De La Senne beers, they've not been shy on the hops. Dark fruit and chocolate peek through at times, and there is even a little smokiness that seems to come and go.

It is a different take on a traditional Belgian Christmas beer, but one that after the first couple of sips will keep intriguing your palette all the way to the end of the glass.



Style: Belgian Christmas Beer (Kerstbier)

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie de la Senne

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.8%

Bush de Noël 2015



The Bush beers are renowned for being amongst Belgium's most alcoholic brews, but still very balanced and drinkable. The Bush Amber (Scaldis) for a time held the record as Belgium's strongest beer.

So it is no surprise that the Bush de Noel is one of Belgium's booziest Christmas beers. Introduced in 1991, the brewery responded to consumer demand by producing a beer 'to add lustre' to their festive celebrations.

It is a beer made of only malt, hops candy sugar and water. And of course the very distinctive Dubuisson house yeast. Unusually for a Christmas beer, there is no spicing or any other adjunct added to this beer.

This beer is also dry-hopped, with hop flowers added to the tanks in which the beer rests after fermentation. The result is something akin to a hoppy barley wine. A big thick body, full of caramel malt and over-ripe stone fruits with a nice hoppy bite to balance things out.

While it is still only brewed in small quantities, this is one winter seasonal beer that is eagerly anticipated each year.

Style: Belgian Christmas Beer (Kerstbier)

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie Dubuisson

Alcohol Content (ABV): 12.0%

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