

St Feuillien Saison

Brasserie St Feuillien has been operated by the Friart family since 1873. The Saison is one of the most recent additions, being introduced to the market in 2009; at the request of the US importer.

It is a fairly traditional style saison, though at 6.5%, it is a little higher in alcohol. The Belgian's call this a 'beer of the terroir', capturing the rustic characteristics of the fertile southern lands of Belgium.

The beer isn't the funkier of saisons, but it does have a lovely earthy character, coupled with a nice grainy malt body.

There are strong fruit flavours, and a little dry biscuit character from the malt body. Citrus and some gentle spicing add another flavour element, and every few sips there is a hint of smokiness in the dry, not-too-bitter finish.

Overall it is a really easy drinking beer, and doesn't show much sign of the higher alcohol. A decent session beer, albeit you'd end up with a shorter session maybe!

Style: Saison

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie St Feuillien

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)



De Molen Frank & Vrij



We only just got this beer. The De Molen guys contacted us the day our pallets were being collected to advise they were packing their first attempt at a north-east style IPA. These are always one-off's. They asked if we wanted a row of cartons added to one of our pallets, which of course we did!

This was the first beer we pulled out of the container to try. We received it on Tuesday, and we're sending out the packs on Thursday. It really couldn't be much fresher, considering where it has come from.

The aroma is awesome. Ripe tropical fruits – passionfruit, mango, pineapple, peach and some citrus. This follows through in the flavour, with a real tropical fruit juice-like sweetness. There is a bitterness, but it is very early on, and seems to diminish toward the back of the tongue.

Yet in the aftertaste, there is a lingering bitterness, or more like a prickle, that grabs the cheeks and middle of your tongue in a very pleasant way. It is just enough to over-ride the juicy body, which *almost* errs on being too sweet.

But I don't think it is. Super-easy drinking for a 6.9% IPA. Think I'll grab another!

Style: IPA (Vermont-style)

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.9% (1.80 Std Drinks)

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Ter Dolen Armand

Ter Dolen has to be one of the most picturesque and unique breweries to visit in all of Belgium. Housed in a beautiful 16th century castle that was home to the abbots of Sint-Truiden, the castle was in a state of disrepair when it was purchased by one of the founding brewers in 1990. Over four years it was extensively renovated and now hosts the brewery, bar and guest house.

A European summer afternoon is the perfect time to take up temporary residence in the large outdoor terrace and sample the offerings of the brewery while taking in the history of the buildings around you.

Armand is a beer first produced in 2011 in tribute to one of the founding brewers; Armand Desplenter. It is a delicious Belgian blond ale, dry-hopped with cascade hops.

There is a good dose of citrus and grainy malt in both the aroma and flavour. A clean, light malt body combines with grapefruit and lemon citrus and an earthy hoppy bite. Good carbonation adds to the sharp mouthfeel with a nice spicy, bitter aftertaste that lingers.



Style: Belgian Blonde Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij De Dool

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.0% (1.82 Std Drinks)

Lefse Biere de Noel



A European Christmas is something special, no matter how many you've been there for. The short days and cold winter nights signal the introduction of the Christmas markets in the town squares, full of beautiful ornaments for the Christmas tree, all manner of scarves and gloves and the waft of gluhwien as you browse the stall. And the special dark seasonal beers that you look forward to all year.

Even the big boys indulge in this tradition, which is why we have the Lefse Biere de Noël.

Many of the Kerstbiers are big dark monsters of 10% plus, but Lefse bring their Christmas beer in at a very moderate 6.6%.

It pours a dark mahogany with aromas of plums, raisins, clove and nutmeg. And these attributes follow through in the flavour. A fairly sweet and dark fruity malt body, with a little bitterness and spicy to break things up.

This really is the introduction to Christmas beers, and kind of whets the appetite for something bigger and bolder. A really pleasant beer to enjoy on a cold night when in need of a little warming.

Style: Kerstbier

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Abbaye De Lefse (AB-InBev)

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.6% (1.72 Std Drinks)

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Averbode

This is a fairly random beer, even when in Belgium.

The Averbode Abbey is the home of the Norbertine Monks in Mechelen-Brussels. The abbey had a brewing history dating back to the 14th-Century, which continued until 1917 when the German occupation saw the copper kettles put to alternate use.

But in 2014, the good monks of the abbey decided to revive the brewing traditions. They contacted Brouwerij Huyghe (famous for the Delirium beers) to resurrect one of their beers. And hence we have Averbode Strong Belgian Ale.

It is a really well balanced, tasty beer. A multi grain mix of barley, oat and spelt combine to give a nice creamy, full mouthfeel. The dry-hopping accentuates the grassy and floral hop character. And constant in the background are the typical Belgian yeast characteristics.

Good carbonation aids the crisp mouthfeel, as the beer finishes dry with a lingering bitterness.

Awards: *this beer won a bronze medal in the Australian International Beer awards in 2016 for best Belgian Pale/Blonde Ale.*

Style: Strong Blonde Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Abdij Averbode (Brouwerij Huyghe)

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5% (1.95 Std Drinks)



Emelisse Winterbier Engelse Drop 2015



Continuing the theme of winter beers (now that it's cold an all!) we've had this beer stashed away for a while now waiting for the right time to include it in a beer pack. And the time has come.

Emelisse has something of a tradition of adding an interesting ingredient to their winter beer. The 2015 version is noted by the addition of the 'Engelse Drop'. Translated, this is 'English licorice'. A quick whiff of the aroma and the first taste on the tongue will attest to this addition.

Licorice allsorts were first produced in Sheffield, England in 1899 and are very popular in The Netherlands. So I guess it is no surprise that Dutch brewers decided to add this to one of their dark beers.

The beer is classified as an ABT/Quadrupel. Quite dark, with a heavy malt body, there is a dark fruit sweetness couple with a roasted malt bitterness. There is also a nutty character, and a hint of herbal character behind the anise flavour of the licorice.

If you are a licorice fan, this should be a beer you will really enjoy.

Style: ABT/Quadrupel

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Bierbrouwerij Grand Café Emelisse

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5% (2.21 Std Drinks)

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