

Brew By Numbers 20/04 Belgian Pale Ale – Hallertau Blanc and Mandarina Bavaria

Well that's a mouthful of a title for a little pale ale!

This beer is the fourth version of the little Belgian Pale Ales that the BBNo team enjoying experimenting with in their European summer.

Hallertau Blanc and Mandarina Bavaria are the hops used in this version, which was first released earlier this year.

The base beer is a clean, crisp and light malt body, with a Belgian yeast aroma. The particular use of hops provides a strong lemon and grapefruit citrus kick with a little peppery spice.

These are quite simple, deliciously drinkable beers. And a good way to understand the different characteristics of the hops used in each variant....if you can remember the last one!

Style: Belgian Pale Ale
Country: England
Brewer: Brew By Numbers
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.5% (1.17 Std Drinks)



Kaapse Maria

If you google 'Kaapse Maria' chances are you'll end up on a page for a small beer and wine bar/café in Rotterdam. And that's fair enough – it is a cool little café just off the beaten path in Rotterdam, specializing in craft beer and organic wines.

The bar boasts 25 taps of both local and international beer. And their house beer is none other than Kaapse Brouwers Maria Vermont Pale Ale.

It is the first time I've had a pale ale in this style, so can only really compare it to the NEIPA's that are flooding the market both here and abroad. It pours a suitably hazy, slightly dull straw colour, with enough aromatic hops for a pleasant fruity flavour.

As you'd expect, the bitterness is quite muted, with just a little upfront that disappears as the beer progresses. A slightly sweet malt body, more of that tropical fruit juice flavour and just enough bitterness to dry things out.

Such an easy beer to drink, so don't leave this one sitting too long in your beer fridge. It is ready to go!

***Have I had this beer before?** You may well have tried a beer of the same name, but this is a completely different recipe to the wood-infused pale ale.*

Style: Vermont Pale Ale
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Kaapse Brouwers
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.7% (1.22 Std Drinks)



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Kees Farmhouse IPA

For such a creative brewer, Kees doesn't seem to have too many staples in his portfolio; rather choosing to create and experiment whenever possible.

But his Farmhouse IPA quickly found a permanent place in the portfolio. And for that I'm pretty thankful as I really like this beer.

It is a lively little number, so be careful with the pour which reveals a hazy golden orange body giving a fruity and malty aroma with a background of 'barnyard' funk.

The beer is very much an IPA, showing a little early malt sweetness, quickly overtaken by a firm hop bitterness and some gentle spicing from the French saison yeast.

The high level of carbonation and super dry finish make this a real thirst-quencher, and one that you can sip away on through the afternoon.

Style: Farmhouse IPA
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Kees
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0% (1.56 Std Drinks)



Ganstaller Rauch Royal

Germany has a terrific beer culture, characterised by the seemingly endless numbers of small local breweries, satisfying the thirst of beer drinkers in the local village and not much further. Tasty hefeweizens, malty doppelbocks and clean crisp lagers are in abundance.

But thanks to the Reinheitsgebot, there isn't as much diversity in German beers as there is in other beer-loving nations. And that is one of the reasons we so love the beers of Ganstaller. They comply with the German Purity Law, but are certainly not the run-of-the-mill styles.

So to the Rauch Royal. The name hints at the fact it uses smoked malts, and I guess royal just implies it's pretty good. It is probably the most interesting beer we've had to date from Ganstaller – a smoked Imperial India Pale Lager.

There is a bit to get your head around with that, but just sip and enjoy it for what it is. The smokiness is there, but certainly not in a confronting way. There is a big malt body carrying all the flavours, there is a nice fruity sweetness with almost a hint of honey. Then the beer dries out with a firm bitterness thanks to the dry-hopping.

To fit all the above in one beer, and manage to keep everything in balance is a pretty neat trick.

Style: Smoked Imperial India Pale Lager
Country: Germany
Brewer: Ganstaller Brau
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.2% (2.14 Std Drinks)



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Schuppenboer Tripel Grand Cru (Cognac BA)

It must be the month for long beer names I think. Another beer from Hobbybrouwerij Het Nest to give hope to all budding home brewers with aspirations of turning commercial.

If you don't know the story of these guys, they are a beer collective who decided to brew some beers on the 10th Anniversary of their club. And they were pretty successful, now gypsy brewing batches of their different beers quite regularly.

This beer is a special brew. The Schuppenboer Tripel is a great beer in itself, and the Grand Cru version is brewed based on the same recipe, but increased for an ABV of 10%. The Grand Cru was in fact the beer we were going to get, but we found the Cognac barrel aged version was available. And it's hard to turn down a limited edition barrel aged beer; of course!

A big malty body of the Belgian tripel, with good spicing from the yeast and the addition of coriander and Cascade hops.

I don't get a lot of barrel character from this, but it is a really smooth beer for such a heavy-hitting tripel.

Style: Belgian Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Hobbybrouwerij Het Nest

Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



Inglorious Brew Stars Inglorious Quad

The story behind this beer and brewery is a good one, as is often the case.

Twin brothers Erwin and Benny were showing a keen enough interest in beer to warrant their wives signing them up to a homebrewing course run by none other than our friend Davy at Brouwerij Alvinne.

So in September 2012, the twin brothers made their first steps toward becoming brewers. Less than two years later, with just their fifth brew the boys won the award for 'Best Hobby Beer' at the Belgo-Dutch Low Countries Brouwland Beer Competition.

The prize was the chance to brew a commercial quantity at Brouwerij Anders, and distribution in one of Belgium's beer outlet chains. Buoyed by the reception of the beer in the marketplace, Inglorious Brew Stars officially commenced operations in late 2014.

The beer they have to thank for their success is a beautiful dark quadrupel with an inviting aroma of roasted malts, caramelised sugar, bitter chocolate and hints of coffee. These all follow through in the flavour, with the sweet lingering addition raisins, prunes and figs, and a hint of woodiness. It is quite a complex, lasting flavour with just a hint of alcohol warmth giving away the high ABV.

Style: Quadrupel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Inglorious Brew Stars

Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.3% (2.68 Std Drinks)



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