

## Maneblusser

The Het Anker brewery is in the city of Mechelen, near Antwerp, and is most well known for their 'Gouden Carolus' range of beers. This beer isn't part of any label range, rather a one off beer brewed to celebrate an historical legend of their city.

The story dates back to a night in 1687, when the moon that night projected an unusual reddish glow. A drunken guardsman stirred from his stupor and looked out over the city that was wrapped in a dense blanket of fog. The red glow through the fog bounced off the roof of the beautiful tower of Saint Rumbold's Cathedral, deceiving his bleary eyes. He raised the alarm that the tower was on fire.

The city guard sprang into action, racing toward the tower. But before they could get there, the moon has moved through the fog and the red-orange glow of the tower disappeared, giving the impression the fire has been put out. From that moment on, the Mechelen's were known as 'Maneblussers', which translates as 'Moon Extinguishers'. Hence the firefighter on the label!

The beer is higher in alcohol than a typical witbier, tending toward a blonde. The aroma is rich in citrus and banana. The yeast character carries through in the flavour, with a fairly light malty body, citrus, coriander and a prickly finish.



**Style:** Witbier

**Country:** Belgium

**Brewer:** Brouwerij Het Anker

**Alcohol Content (ABV):** 5.8% (1.51 Std Drinks)



## Kees It's A Blond

The ever-versatile Kees created a new beer in January that he's called 'It's A Blond!' And as usual, it was a beer that is anything but true to a style guideline.

A look through the list of ingredients shows the use of Pils and Munchener malts. Amarillo hops are the lupuline choice. There is also coriander and mango added. And this is all fermented with the famously spicy and complex yeast from the Trappist Monks at Westmalle.

Its almost as if these ingredients were thrown together, and the result was something of a surprise. A bit like not know the sex of your baby – oh wow, this one's a blond!

I took me quite a few sips to start wrapping my head around what this beer was. There is the sweetness of the mango, with the fruitiness adding to the caramel malt body resulting in a heavier, stickier mouthfeel than expected. The hops are there, though they come in quite late, but linger in the aftertaste.

It wasn't quite what I was expecting, though is certainly an interesting beer.

**Style:** Blonde

**Country:** The Netherlands

**Brewer:** Brouwerij Kees

**Alcohol Content (ABV):** 6.0% (1.56 Std Drinks)

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## Kaapse Carrie

This is another beer from Kaapse Brouwers, who have their brewpub in the port district of Rotterdam. You may recall that the owners of De Molen had a hand in helping start the brewery, and they still brew a number of the Kaapse beers at the De Molen brewery; including this beer 'Carrie'.

And it has a bit of the De Molen character about it. Although not as well noted for the hop-driven beers, De Molen make quite a few of them, and we've featured several over the years.

They have two distinct styles for their DIPA's – either really dry, light and crisp, or else much thicker, heavier and sweet. And this IPA falls into that second category.

Quite a dark body, it has a heavy caramel malt backbone. There are lots of hops in there featuring Galena, Cascade, Chinook and Simcoe, then dry-hopped with Amarillo. A really fruity aroma, but somehow a more subdued hop profile, akin to an English IPA. This beer will please those with a sweeter tooth, or who like their IPA's with a big malt body.

**Style: IPA**

**Country: The Netherlands**

**Brewer: Kaapse Brouwers**

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



## Brussels Beer Project Dark Sister

The Brussels Beer Project is an initiative that began when two friends decided they wanted to brew beer, but in a different way to that which defines traditional Belgian brewing. A successful crowd-funding campaign in 2013 saw the creation of this very different beer company.

They started as gypsy brewers, and still brew the majority of their beers out of Brouwerij Anders, though they do have a small brew pub set-up in the heart of Brussels which gives them a convenient and visible home to showcase their creations.

Dark Sister was one of the earliest beers conceived, imagined as a winter seasonal offering that differed from the traditional high alcohol, spiced dark Christmas beers that Belgium is famous for. It was decided to make a dark beer version of their first success story – Delta IPA.

It has a fresh fruity aroma, combining hints of tropical fruits with darker stone fruits. A dark roasted malt body gives flavours of bitter chocolate, coffee, citrus, molasses and a hint of licorice.

It's a really interesting Black IPA which combines the lighter, tropical side of an IPA with the more complex body of a bigger beer style and depth of flavours that good dark beers offer. Looking forward to more beers from these guys.



**Style: Black IPA**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brussels Beer Project**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.66% (1.73 Std Drinks)**

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## De Molen Blade & Stone

Brouwerij De Molen make public their intention to create at least one new beer each month, and they do a mighty good job of achieving this objective. This beer is one such new creation from January this year.

Never afraid to take on different styles of beer, this offering is best described as an American Strong Ale. It is one of those dumping bucket styles, where beers that don't sit comfortably within an established style can be placed. And of course the use of 'American' in the title subtly implies the use of extra hops, or higher alcohol. Or in this case both.

This is a big beer, with a solid malt backbone. An early fruity sweetness is offset by a pleasant hop bitterness. There is lots of dried fruit in the flavour, like orange and peach, with a hint of strawberry. Caramel malts give a lovely soft and full mouthfeel, with a pleasant hop bitterness.

The flavours linger with a warming alcohol presence for a long and satisfying aftertaste. This is a big beer but deceptively drinkable.

**Style: American Strong Ale**  
**Country: Netherlands**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.5% (2.99 Std Drinks)**



## White Pony The Crow



This beer sees the offerings from White Pony return to true form, by way of a massive 14% Imperial Stout.

First point to note – don't drink this beer and attempt to drive any time soon. It is a DUI in a bottle!

It really is a big beer, pouring very dark brown to black without seeming to have the viscosity you might expect from such a beast. There is dark chocolate, heavily roasted malt, a little coffee, dried fruits like figs and raisins and enough of a Belgian yeast character to know where this beer was brewed.

If I have one criticism of this beer, it somehow feels a little thin-bodied; which isn't something you'd normally say about a 14% behemoth. The flavours are really well balanced, and the big alcohol is really well disguised.

**Fun Fact:** *while food and beer matching has become a feature of many websites, in truly eclectic style White Pony must be the only brewery to suggest a music pairing for their beers. The suggestion for this beer is 'In Flames' by the Jester Race. (Nope, me neither – but give it a go while tasting this beer!)*

**Style: Russian Imperial Stout**  
**Country: Italy**  
**Brewer: White Pony Microbirrificio**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 14.0% (3.65 Std Drinks)**

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