

Quirks & Quinine

De Molen is most known for their big dark beers, barrel-aged beauties and smoked malt marvels. Beavertown from London is known for their hoppy ales more than any other. So this collaborative effort came as something of a surprise.

Brewed at De Molen, the beer is a saison with three different malts and a bounty of botanicals added in the mix. Barley, wheat and spelt malts combine with juniper berries, lemon zest, coriander and chinchona bark for the beer version of a Gin & Tonic.

The beer has a fairly full mouthfeel, feeling a little heavier than say a traditional saison. There is a strong spicy character, the coriander is strong along with a peppery spiciness associated with the saison yeast.

Also an earthy, slightly medicinal flavour, not a lot of citrus from the lemon zest, and a woody character. The finish is dry and slightly spicy.

It isn't going to replace a good old G & T by any means, but an interesting experimental beer for sure.

Style: Saison

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen/Beavertown (UK) Collab.

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



De Brabandere Wild Tripel Hop

Brouwerij De Brabandere used to be known as Brouwerij Bavik, most well known for their Petrus range of beers, including the Petrus Tripel. The base of this beer is the Petrus Tripel, with a few changes and additions.

Brewmaster Chris Van Acker has been working at the brewery for 30 years, living through many of the changes the brewery underwent over the years and being at the centre of the brewery's Foeder beer project. His creation in recognition of this achievement says as much about a brewer's ability to change with the times, even under the weight of tradition.

Two American hops – Amarillo and Cascade – are added to the Petrus Tripel. And then he added 15% foederbier (essentially the Petrus Aged Pale). And somehow this worked...really well!

The beer is light bodied, and slightly funky. The sweet malts, fruity notes and distinctive yeasty character of the tripel are there, with the addition of a little fruit tartness like green apples or grapefruit, plus a little woodiness.

It really is both interesting, complex and approachable to a wider audience; which seems paradoxical. But it works, I really do like this beer. Hats off to the brewer for making a special beer something that is different and memorable. No safe options taken here.

Style: Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij De Brabandere

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



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Alvinne Cuvee Freddy Framboos

Sour beer alert!

We love Alvinne, and we love it when they experiment with their existing beers and improve them by adding something you didn't necessarily expect. And they seem to do it consistently.

Cuvee Freddy is their delicious version of an Oud Bruin. They then decided to add 20 kilograms of fresh raspberries per 100 litres of beer, and age this for a few months in red wine barrels.

The result is a beer that has the classic 'sweet and sour' nature of an oud bruin. Early malt sweetness with some ripe red fruits, then the balsamic vinegar acidity takes hold of the sides of your tongue and squeezes tight.

And then just when you thought it was over, the raspberries come through with a dry, tart bite that leaves your mouth feeling refreshed and ready to do it all over again.

Style: Oud Bruin
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Alvinne
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



Millevertus La Papesse

Two friends decided to start a small brewery with second hand equipment back in 2004. Their venture steadily found favour, such that in 2011 they set up a new facility with increased capacity.

This small brewery in the tiny village of Breuvanne, is nestled in the very southern area of Belgium, down near the borders with France and Luxembourg. It must have been a fantastic addition to the village, whose inhabitants number only in their thousands.

I first came across this brewery many years ago thanks to a very interesting pepper beer. It turned out that they make a few experimental styles with unconventional ingredients, as well as a range of traditional abbey style ales.

Our first beer from Millevertus is typically Belgian, and well-suited to our current cooler weather (at least for those of us in the south-eastern states I guess!)

La Papesse is a Belgian quadrupel (or ABT as they were known before Belgium started adopting the US terminology). It pours a rich brown colour, giving off notes of sweet caramel malt, dried red stone fruits a hint of licorice.

These all follow through in the flavour with caramel, dark chocolate, raisins, roasted malt and brown sugar balanced by just enough hop bitterness and a rum-like alcohol warmth that leaves a lovely lingering aftertaste.

Style: Quadrupel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brasserie Artisanale Millevertus
Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.0% (2.86 Std Drinks)



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Corsendonk Christmas Ale

The Corsendonk name refers to the Priory of Corsendonk which was an important monastery over the centuries spanning 1398 to 1784, after which it was closed down thanks to the French Revolution.

It wasn't until 1968 that the abbey was rebuilt as accommodation. Later in 1982, it was decided to use the Corsendonk name to promote a range of beers. This is the process which gives rise to the term 'abbey ale'. There was no actual brewery in the Priory of Corsendonk, so the beer making was contracted out to various breweries in the area. Now, all of the Corsendonk beers are produced at the Brasserie De Bocq.

In Belgium, they refer to this as being just a beer brand, but that doesn't mean the beer isn't any good. In fact the Corsendonk range of beers are renowned as being excellent examples of their respective styles. The beer we feature is the Christmas Ale.

The beer is rich and smooth, with a big dark roasty caramel malt body, brown sugar, dried fruits, Christmas cake spices like clove, cinnamon, licorice and a subtle hint of smoke. A gentle alcohol warmth to suit the season, and a lingering dry earthy finish.



Style: Christmas Beer (Kerstbier)

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Corsendonk

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5% (1.68 Std Drinks)



De Moersleutel Smeerolie

De Moersleutel is the most recent addition to our portfolio. They are four young brothers, and with the part time help of their mother and father, began commercial operations two years ago in June 2016.

The boys are self-confessed beer geeks, originally warning me that they prefer to focus on 'outspoken beers'! We've had two shipments from them now, and I can confirm that each and every one of their beers are indeed delicious, and anything but understated.

The name translates as 'lubricating oil' and it is an apt description of this heavy duty imperial stout.

This beer has a magnificent aroma, laden with deep roasted malts and dried fruits. There is dark chocolate and roasted malt featuring heavily in the taste, along with dried red stone fruits, coffee and a slight hint of smoke.

With a thick, heavy mouthfeel this is still a very easy drinking big stout. Let it sit out and warm a little and the flavours and aromas will really open up.

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Moersleutel

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

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