

## De Molen Yes & Yolo

This beer is one of the many one-off creations made by De Molen, where the brewers scratch their creative itch. And it is something of a rarity to be offered such a 'normal' beer as a lager.

But then any brewer will always tell you brewing a good lager is one of the most challenging styles to tackle. There isn't a place to hide any imperfections or problems, as there are in the bigger, bolder styles.

Not that we'd expect to find any issues from this most accomplished brewery, and they've produced a really refreshing, crisp and tasty beer here.

Pils and caramel malts combine for a light grainy body with a slight sweetness up front giving way to a pleasant lingering bitterness.

Cascade hops are used both for bittering and aroma, with the latter offering the pleasant tropical fruit aroma the comes out more as the beer warms slightly.

**Style: India Pale Lager**  
**Country: The Netherlands**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.0% (1.30 Std Drinks)**



## La Debauche IPA



France has not been known for its craft beer, being the poor cousin to the wine industry which is a part of the fabric of the nation. But that is changing – and fast. Microbreweries and brew pubs are popping up at an unprecedented rate.

And one of the new crop of breweries gaining much attention in the craft beer scene is La Debauche which was founded in July 2013 by friends and amateur brewers Eglantine and Aurelien. They started their brewery with just two 120-hectolitre fermentation vessels. Their immediate success warranted an expansion which was achieved by crowdfunding.

They are known as being very much experimental and creative brewers, producing a range of styles from stouts to barley wines, funky saisons to barrel aged sour beers.

But if we need to establish a benchmark on a brewery, given our love of IPA's it seems an appropriate beer to pick to introduce our newest brewery in our portfolio. And it's a decent introduction.

A good dose of tropical fruit aroma follows through into the taste, along with a medium grainy malt body and a solid level of bitterness that lingers long into the aftertaste.

**Style: IPA**  
**Country: France**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij De Brabandere**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0% (1.56 Std Drinks)**

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## Barbe Ruby

From the fantastic Brouwerij Verhaeghe, makers of Duchesse de Bourgogne, Vichtenaar and Echt Kriekenbier – we have a second beer in the Barbe range.

Barbe Ruby is classed as a fruit beer, featuring cherries but in a very different way to a Kriek. It pours a stunning dark red colour, topped by the prettiest pink hued foam.

The aroma comes bursting out of the bottle, and this is where I (at first) felt a dislike for this beer. To me it was all sweet almonds, like those complimentary Italian almond cookies (Amaretti) you get with coffee.

There is an early sweetness, a combination of fruit and malt, which is quickly overridden by a solid and sustained tartness that continue to induce an eye squint at each sip.

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. I went from loathing to quite liking this beer, several times over, but in the end I finished my glass and probably could have explored another. But not straight away!



**Style: Fruit (Cherry) Beer**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Verhaeghe**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.7% (2.00 Std Drinks)**

## Straffe Hendrik Wild 2018

For those who have been to Bruges, I'm betting a fair percentage have enjoyed touring the De Halve Maan brewery, pretty close to the centre of the town. It has all the historical character of an olden day brewery, yet it keeps pace of innovation – it now pumps its beer underground from the brewery outside the walls of Bruges to save the trucks coming in to the city to collect it!

The brewery is well-known for the Brugse Zot beer – a Blonde and a Dubbel, but the Straffe Hendrik label targets a slightly different segment of the market with their 9% Tripel and 11% Quadrupel beers.

And then there is the Straffe Hendrik Wild, which is a once-a-year creation using the Tripel as the base and then refermenting with a wild yeast strain. This beer then conditions for at least three months – much longer than the standard beer – to allow the wild yeast sufficient time to take hold and evolve.

We end up with lovely tripel, with a strong yeast character which is also lightly funky. Cellaring this beer will pay dividends, but we won't blame you for tasting it now.

**Style: Tripel**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij De Halve Maan**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.0% (2.34 Std Drinks)**



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## Kaapse Klaas

Winter in Australia brings out all things 'Christmas in July', so it would be remiss of us not to include a Christmas beer in our July pack. This beer is the winter seasonal offering from our friends at Kaapse Brouwers in Rotterdam.

The cold nights call for more robust beers with stronger flavours and a warming touch of alcohol. And that is exactly what we get with this beer.

And it comes with some recommendation – it was voted 'Best Winter Beer 2017' in The Netherlands Winterbier Festival. Now that's a festival I wouldn't mind attending one year!

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.

For lovers of dark spiced beers, this is just the trick to open and let warm up while sitting by the fireplace. If you aren't such a fan of the spices, try nibbling on a piece of dark chocolate while you sip this beer, and it will soften up those spice characters.

**Style:** Christmas Beer (Kerstbier)

**Country:** The Netherlands

**Brewer:** Kaapse Brouwers

**Alcohol Content (ABV):** 9.8% (2.55 Std Drinks)



## Emelisse White Label IRS Old Smokey Bourbon

A couple of months back, we tried the first of the barrel aged White Label series from Emelisse that was fully created by the new owners at Slot-Oostende. And now we have their second beer in the White Label series.

The previous ownership - with brewers Kees and John – used their core range IRS (11%) as the base beer for many White Label beers, aged in various barrels or added a different feature ingredient.

This time we have (as Emelisse had a habit of calling them) an Imperial Russian Stout, though at 8% ABV I'd be much more inclined to drop the 'Russian' from the name and just present as an Imperial Stout.

They have used a single-use Old Smokey Bourbon barrel for this aging, and the bourbon character comes through really strongly. The imperial stout base is in behind with tastes of bitter chocolate, roasted malts, hints of dark fruit and the slightest touch of woody smokiness.

The body is a little thinner than you'd probably expect for this style but there is still a lot of flavour for a beer of 8%. Another step on the barrel aging journey these young brewers are undertaking.

**Style:** Imperial Stout

**Country:** Netherlands

**Brewer:** Brouwerij Emelisse (Slot-Oostende)

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

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