

Hoppa Hontas (Equinox)

Maenhout is a small brewery originally started in 2009 by husband and wife team Birgit and Thijs. Starting out with a small 500L brewing system, the popularity of their beers saw them move to larger premises in 2015. You can find the new brewery in the town of Pittem, in West Flanders; which is south of Bruges and west of Ghent.

These young brewers create beers that are based on traditional Belgian styles, but with a more modern bent. (The label art is also a little risqué and very un-Belgian!)

The Hoppa Hontas is our first example. It is something between a Belgian Pale and a Blond, and has been brewed with several variants. It has previously featured Amarillo and Sorachi Ace hops, and in late April 2018 they brewed for the first time the Equinox version.

It has quite a grainy malt body, supplying just a little early sweetness. But this gives way quickly to an assertive bitterness; especially as the beer warms. A touch of citrus and and floral bitterness linger in the aftertaste.

Style: Blond

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Maenhout

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



Inglorious Brew Stars Amis Fleur #892



This beer is timed for this months pack as it was brewed to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Bloemencorso Loenhout last year. The event is an elaborate flower (bloemen) parade, with groups preparing colourful floats to drive through the city streets.

The event takes place on the second Sunday of September each year, so we've just passed the 66th annual celebrations!

The name 'Amis Fleur' is actually a type of Dahlia, and is recorded as number 892 in the worldwide Dahlia Register. (Hopefully you can use that tidbit in a trivia night some time!)

The label tells you its an IPA, but I'm going to call it a Belgian IPA. It is full of hops, but of the European kind rather than the punchy American hops we are now so used to. It has a strong citrus note, with a good level of earthy bitterness.

It is a little cloudy and has a little tart funk to it from the yeast, and at stages while you are tasting it might remind of a light saison. Whatever we call it, enjoy it on a warm afternoon, basking in the knowledge you now know more about Dahlia's that you did before!

Style: Belgian IPA

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Inglorious Brew Stars

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

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La Debauche Saison

Turning their hand to another classic Belgian style, our French brewery La Debauche turn their hand to brewing a saison.

This to me is much more a farmhouse ale than a classic Belgian saison. The yeast character is delicate and defined (rather than big, bold and funky), but comes through more strongly as the beer warms.

There is a little lemon citrus and herbal spice to the flavour. A grainy malt body presents a sweetness up front, giving way to a floral and pappy bitterness. With a dry finish, the bitterness lingers in the aftertaste.

Given their location in France is much closer to Spain than Belgium, it may stand to reason that this beer isn't overly influenced by their northern neighbours. It is more in keeping with the French style and seems to suit being crisp and light.

This would be a nice beer to accompany a meal, which again seems perfectly in keeping with its Gallic heritage.



Style: Farmhouse Ale

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

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

Kaapse Tineke



Something a little different to the beers we've had from Kaapse previously. They call this beer their Breakfast Stout.

We can also call it an Oatmeal Stout, given that roasted oats are one of the five different malts used in making this beer, and only the slightest coffee hint.

Which is not a bad thing at all. The beer has a smooth and luxurious mouthfeel, rich with chocolate and caramel malts. Dark fruits like raisins and plums combine with cocoa and a hint of licorice to add to the flavour profile.

The beer dries out, with a low to medium bitterness on the finish. If I have a criticism it would be that the flavour doesn't seem to last in the mouth, but disappears a bit quickly. But it isn't the biggest beer, so maybe I'm being too critical.

The beer is named after a Dutch television personality who presents a popular breakfast television program. You can of course still choose to drink your imperial stout for breakfast, but maybe that wasn't the intention behind labelling this beer as a breakfast stout!

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Kaapse Brouwers

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.9% (2.06 Std Drinks)

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De Molen Mout & Mocca

I had to check back through the beer club archives to see if we had shared this beer before or not. It's a beer we've had on our wholesale portfolio for some years, so it was a bit of a surprise to find that we hadn't featured this beer yet. We can rectify that now.

'Malt & Mocha' is a beer brewed seasonally, released in October each year for in readiness for the European winter. It is a big coffee Imperial Stout, and in recent years has had a little batch variance in the ABV.

If you had the pleasure of trying a pre-2011 version, this was brewed at 9.5%. Since then it is normally around the 10% ABV, though we have had batches as high as 11.4%. So a little surprise when we open our cartons of each batch.

As the name suggests, the beer is dominated by chocolate and coffee aromas. The big chocolate and caramel malt body balances out the roasted coffee bitterness really cleverly. So much so, that as a non-coffee drinker, I still very much enjoy this beer.

The suggested best before date on this is a mere 5 years, as opposed to the 25 years code on most of De Molen's dark beers. It is shown this way so the coffee flavours don't dissipate over time. But I've never kept any bottles long enough to test that theory.

Style: Imperial Stout
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



Emelisse White Label IRS Red Wine Blend BA

With the inclusion of this beer, we've now tried all of the new Emelisse White Label barrel series beers.

This time we have the Imperial Russian Stout aged in different red wine barrels and then blended for bottling and keggling.

It is a small-ish bodied beer for an RIS, but I think the red wine barrel works well, as it doesn't have the overpowering nature that a bourbon or whiskey barrel sometimes can.

There is a real woody character, roasted malts with a little coffee hint, dark chocolate, deep over-ripe dark red fruits, red wine which tends a little port-like with the touch of oxidation.

The beer is quite dry, but still smooth. I think it is the balance of all the attributes which works for me here. Nothing is too obvious, but nothing seems out of place.

Style: Russian Imperial Stout
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Emelisse (Slot-Oostende)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.0% (2.34 Std Drinks)

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