

De Molen Summer of '18

Another Berliner Weisse that is just perfect for summer afternoons, so no surprise at the name.

You may well have many Berliners over this summer, but this is likely the only one that features Minneola, which is an orange citrus fruit that is something like a cross between a grapefruit and a mandarin.

The beer is dry hopped with Simcoe, Mosaic and Citra hops (and Citra is even used as the bittering hop) so there is a real tropical fruitiness to this beer. Aromas of orange, mandarin, tangerine and passionfruit follow through in the flavour.

There is a very light sourness, maybe even more of a fruit tartness than sour. Super easy drinking, this beer really doesn't give any impression of being alcoholic.

I can really see myself having a few of these over summer. I only wish all the flavours were dialed up a notch or two. Maybe I'll suggest an imperial version for autumn!



Style: Berliner Weisse
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.8% (1.25 Std Drinks)



La Debauche Belgian Style

This beer from La Debauche used to be marketed as 'La Debauche Blond', now changed to 'Belgian Style'. So while it is nominally classed as a Belgian Blond, there is also more than a nod toward an amber ale.

The beer is darker than a standard blonde beer, with a quite solid, biscuit malt body. A slightly lower level of carbonation adds a little weight to the mouthfeel.

The malt body provides an early sweetness with hints of peach, apricot, citrus, a good dose of spices from the yeast and a minerality from the hops.

Good length to the finish with an herbaceous bitterness, and pleasant lingering flavour. Somewhere along the way I got a small hint of saison about this as well, but can't really point to why. I guess it just adds to the catch-all 'Belgian Style' of this beer!

Style: Belgian Amber Ale
Country: France
Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)

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Toye Goedendag Sterk Blond

We love a good historical reference in a beer name, and this beer owes its moniker to the Battle of the Golden Spurs which was fought in the Flemish town of Kortrijk on the 11th of July, 1302. A small group of Flemish militia managed to defeat the French knights of King Phillippe le Bel of France.

The victory was credited to the use of the goedendag – a fearsome weapon of the age that is basically a combination of a 5 foot long spear, wrapped in a heavy iron head with metal spike. The name translates simply as 'good day', a simple greeting offered by the Flemish. If met with a response in French, the goedendag was swiftly put to use.

I first came across this beer many years ago. We were doing some overtime (research) and ended up at a small bar in Leuven. The owner offered his house beer, which turned out to be his own brew. He had dreams of brewing commercially which he realised in 2012.

The beer is a classic Belgian blond. A big Belgian yeasty aroma, good carbonation making for a nice light, crisp malt body. Spice from the yeast and a good balance of malt versus hops makes for a really enjoyable offering.



Style: Blond
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Toye
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)

Alvinne Morpheus Saison

With their very expressive Morpheus yeast, it seemed only natural to apply their culture to a traditional Belgian style saison. The only trouble with the Alvinne boys is they do very little in a traditional, straightforward manner.

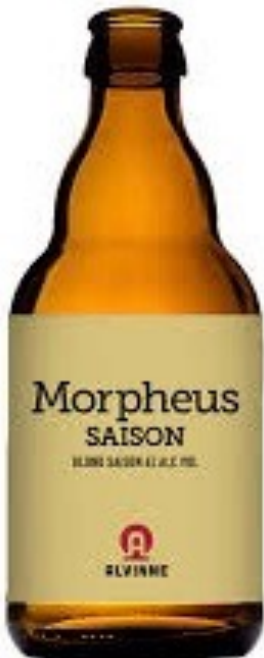
Their saison is a little different in that they blend a small amount of their Omega blond sour beer with the saison. They use just enough to add character without making the beer overtly sour.

So did they succeed?

The beer is a bit strong for a traditional saison, but certainly gives the beer more body and depth. There is an inviting fruit sweetness right at the start, with a crisp grainy body. Orange citrus, yellow berries, apricots, peaches, apples, water crackers and just a little sourness all meld with a solid hop bite and the Pandora's box of funkiness that is Morpheus yeast.

It is refreshing, quite easy drinking, satisfying yet intriguing enough to have you looking for flavour spikes with each sip. There's a lot to enjoy about this beer.

Style: Saison
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Alvinne
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.0% (1.82 Std Drinks)



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Kees Double IPA

This is the newest beer in Kees' core range, replacing the Double Rye IPA (which was a fantastic beer I might add). So I was very keen to try this beer when they arrived.

Many judgements of an IPA start as soon as the can/bottle is opened, with the expectation of that tropical fruity aroma flooding out of the portal. This beer is a little shy in the aroma, and it wasn't until poured and with nose stuck deeply in the glass I started to catch the fruit bowl aroma.

Mosaic, Simcoe and Loral (you may remember this hop when it was still experimental hop HBC 291 used in the 2016 version of Duvel's Tripel Hop?) provide the orange citrus, pineapple, mango and pine.

The beer pours fairly still, though some late 'Guinness' settling does create a head. I was expecting the beer to have low carbonation, but it doesn't taste that way. There is a prickly spiciness to the yeast – think Westmalle Tripel, and this lifts the flavours as well.

A quick check of the ingredients reveals Belgian candi sugar is used, further pressing the claims of having a little bit of tripel about it. By no means a classic West Coast style IPA, but an interesting hybrid that is damn tasty.



Style: Double IPA

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij Kees

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.9% (2.32 Std Drinks)

Straffe Hendrik Quadrupel

I was a little stuck as to which beer to include as the 'big gun' for this pack. The natural choice would be a Belgian Christmas Beer, but I only has Delirium Noel and Struise Tsjeeses on hand, and we've included these in the recent past.

The beer needs to be big, rich and delicious, so while a few of you have probably had this beer before, I'm guessing you won't mind having it again. And if you haven't yet had the pleasure, you should look forward to sitting and sipping this beer as it evolves once opened.

Initially sweet with ripe dark fruits like plums, raisins and cherries, there is a thick dark malt body with more than a hint of dark chocolate in the slight roasty notes and enough hop bitterness and yeast character to prevent it from being cloying.

Take your time and let this beer open right up as it warms, it would be a shame to drink this too cold and too quick. And the gently warming glow you'll feel is the only indication to the big alcohol of this beer.

Beer Fact : *the term 'Quadrupel' is an American introduction to the beer language, and not one readily adopted by the old school Belgian brewers. When first entering the market in September 2010, this beer was the first Belgian beer to include the term 'quadruple' in its name.*



Style: Quadrupel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: De Halve Maan Brouwerij

Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.0% (2.86 Std Drinks)

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