

Kaapse Karel (Gluten Free)

With a daughter who is a coeliac (and who often liked to taste the beers) we have a sympathy for those people who have gluten as an enemy. Many of Europe's 'gluten free' beers start life as a normal glutenised beer, but then had a special enzyme added which eats up the gluten to leave it effectively gluten free.

While we can't market them as 'gluten free' in Australia (they must be labelled as 'gluten reduced'), the effect of the enzyme is to reduce the gluten content to less than 3 parts per million.

This beer is labelled as an American Bitter, though since the rebrand it has been called a sessional pale ale. Either way there is a dose of fruity hops in the aroma, and a very solid hop bitterness to the taste. The beer is fairly light bodied, with a little fruity sweetness early on, giving way to the dry lingering bitterness.

I've tasted both the normal Karel, as well as this gluten free version, and I don't really notice much difference between them. It's a decent beer in its own right, but it must be a real treat for any gluten-affected beer lovers.

Style: American Bitter
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Kaapse Brouwers
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.9% (1.28 Std Drinks)



L'Arogante Stout-ish

Another beer from the L'Arogante beer company, which brews its beers at De Proefbrouwerij near Ghent. This time we have their Belgian Stout.

As we've mentioned before, De Proef is the birthplace of many different beers from a vast array of international brewers, not just from Belgium.

Made with five kinds of barley malt, flaked oats, three types of hops and a Belgian yeast, this stout is a little different to the average stout.

Lots of chocolate and coffee on the nose, which does follow through into the flavour. There is a dry roasted bitterness from the malts but also a noticeable hop bitterness. A good whack of noble hops impart a real earthy bitterness.

It is an interesting beer, with loads of flavour for a lower alcohol beer (at least it is low on the Belgian spectrum), and a different style from the traditional Belgian range offered by many of the breweries.

Style: Stout
Country: Belgium
Brewer: L'Arogante (De ProefBrouwerij)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.5% (1.43 Std Drinks)



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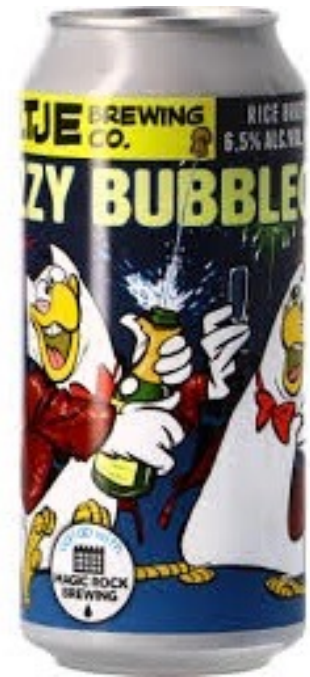
Fizzy Bubblech

Uiltje Brewing Co. are the newest Dutch brewery to join our portfolio. They hail from Haarlem, a city in the north west of The Netherlands, about a half hour drive west of Amsterdam.

Uiltje translates as 'owl' and this forms the centerpiece of their company logo. And the bird theme runs through many of their beers, as we'll see in future packs.

These new cans are fresh off the last container which arrived on Wednesday. The beer is a collaboration with the UK's Magic Rock Brewery, and together they have concocted a Rice Brut IPA.

This beer is really quite true to the style. A hazy straw coloured beer with some nice tropical fruit and pine aroma. The crisp, light grain body combines with the fruity flavours of grapefruit, peach and white grapes. As intended the beer finishes quite dry, with a pleasant lingering bitterness. Welcome to our party, Uiltje!



Style: Brut IPA
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (2.26 Std Drinks)

Rodenbach Alexander

This is another sour alert for our members who aren't (yet) partial to the pucker! We've had several sour beers over the past few months, and I wouldn't normally put them in so frequently, but sometimes I think beers are too good to leave out.

And so we have Rodenbach's Alexander, and what a joy it was to find they were now packaging this in the much more affordable 330ml bottle format.

Rodenbach Alexander was first made in 1986 to celebrate what would have been the 200th birthday of Alexander Rodenbach. He was one of four brothers who started the Rodenbach brewery back in 1821. From when this beer was first brewed in 1986, it took another 30 years for the beer to become a regular in the Rodenbach portfolio.

And thanks goodness it has. The beer is the Rodenbach Grand Cru (a mix of 2/3 old beer aged 24 months in barrels, with 1/3 young beer) then macerated with sour cherries. It makes for a very inviting beer which is at once fruity and sweet and then tart and acidic. It might even convert some sour-phobes!

Style: Flanders Red Ale
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Rodenbach (Palm Breweries)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.6% (1.46 Std Drinks)



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De Molen Keulen & Aken

This is a beer that De Molen previously made as a one-off, but it was so well received that it has now become one of the autumn seasonal regulars.

It is an Imperial Hefeweizen, which is a bit of a different style of beer from what we've come to expect from De Molen.

A solid malt body with pils malt as well as some wheat malt, and the classic banana aromas from the yeast. And because it is De Molen, they've dry-hopped the beer with classic Saaz hops.

It all comes together in an inviting German wheat beer on the nose, full of that banana and a little extra fruity hint thrown in. The body is quite dense, with a good malt backbone. The dry-hopping adds an earthy quality along with a little gentle spice. And somewhere in the background is the slightest hint of something tart.

The beer has a fairly high level of carbonation, exaggerating the spicy prickles from the yeast. And with a pretty big body, there is a nice warmth in the slightly bitter finish.

Style: Imperial Hefeweizen
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.2% (2.40 Std Drinks)



Gulden Draak Brewmaster 2017

Back in 2014, Van Steenberge's brewmaster decided to create a special new beer in dedication to its original brewmaster Jozef Van Steenberge and the 230th anniversary of the original brewery he started.

While holding to their Belgian traditions, but with a look to the current influences around the world, it was decided to create a barrel aged version of the Gulden Draak Quadrupel using whiskey barrels.

This version is the 2017 vintage of that same creation.

At the heart of the beer is the Belgian quad, with a rich fruity and malty body of dark dried fruits like prunes and raisins, caramel, toffee, some spices like clove, nutmeg and pepper and a hint of dessert wine.

The time in barrel adds a real whiskey hit, along with a strong note of vanilla and woody character. The feel is quite soft for such a big beer with a drying finish and warm, lingering aftertaste.

You'd expect a decent beer for a dedication brew from a brewery such as Van Steenberge, and I think this beer does not disappoint.

Style: Quadrupel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Van Steenberge
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.5% (2.73 Std Drinks)