

Uiltje Wingman

Witbiers (or wheat beers) aren't really my thing, but lots of people do enjoy them so we try to include a few in the lineup from time to time. The Belgian Witbier is generally quite crisp and light, easy drinking drop. With coriander, citrus (most often orange) and hints of bubblegum from the yeast, they are a summer 'quaffer'.

So when we find a witbier that has something interesting about it, we'll more often than not say yes. Which brings us to the Uiltje Wingman.

It is a Belgian style wit, made with barley, wheat and oats plus the addition of real watermelon. This makes for a fairly light bready malt backbone, with strong notes of coriander and citrus. There is a strong bubblegum-y note which is probably from the watermelon.

A medium to high carbonation aids the lovely dry finish. The beer is quite big for a wit at 6%, though you wouldn't know it to drink it.

It's a decent beer, and I reckon the watermelon comes through a little more as the beer warms as by the end I felt like I had a mouthful of watermelon in the aftertaste. Or was I looking too hard?!!



Style: Witbier

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0% (1.56 Std Drinks)

Den Herberg Cuvée Deville

If you haven't ever had an Orval, then you really should. (I've even put a carton of them up on the web site to add to your next pack). The relevance – this beer is touted as an Orval clone. That promise alone was worth giving it a try.

Orval is one of Belgium's six Trappist Monasteries, and they only produce the one style for general distribution (though there is Petite Orval for the monks, which is served at the monastery café down the road from the monastery).

It is a Belgian Pale Ale that is dry-hopped between the first and second fermentation, the second of which is fermented with wild *Brettanomyces* yeast. An amazing beer that gets better as it ages, and really quite unique.

So how does this clone stand up?

It is full of Brett. character with barnyard funk, leather, wood and spices. The bready, grainy body provides a deal of sweetness with some further fruity and grassy notes.

The sweetness does seem to last through the beer, and this is probably the biggest difference to the original. But an interesting interpretation and pretty decent beer in its own right to enjoy.

Style: Belgian Pale Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Den Herberg

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.2% (1.61 Std Drinks)



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Barossa Valley Brewing Hazy Heaven 2019

We went for a road trip through Victoria and out to South Australia last year, taking in the Barossa Valley of course. A stop to check out the local brewery, and a few conversations later, we ended up distributing beer for this brewery throughout NSW and Queensland.

For the past couple of years at hop harvest time, the BVB team head to the local Hills Hop Farm to pick hops for a wet hop beer. The brewing team stayed at the brewery this time to commence the brew, while others including family members harvested around 60kgs of cascade hop cones and rushed them back to the brewery. An hour after the picking finished, the hops were in the fermenter!

The end product is the Hazy Heaven NEIPA. Tropical fruit aromas burst from the glass, with tangerine, orange and passionfruit at the fore. There is a fruity sweetness to the beer with a fairly low level of bitterness. It makes for a really easy drinking, well balanced and tasty hazy IPA that belies its ABV.



Style: NEIPA

Country: Australia

Brewer: Barossa Valley Brewing

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

De Molen Fair & Feat

This was a Boreft Festival beer from last years event, so we've had this tucked away in our cool room for at least half a year. But it's now time to set this beauty loose on our beer club members. These Boreft beers are generally one-offs, never to be repeated. Which is often a great shame, but that's the deal. So we have a Belgian style quadrupel with added South American Tonka beans.

Tonka Beans come from tall trees native to Central America, and are sought after as a gourmet ingredient with its rich aroma and flavour. But in large doses, Tonka Beans are toxic and can be lethal. But don't panic – you'd need to eat around 30 Tonka Beans to reach levels that are life threatening. That said, the Tonka Bean is officially banned for consumption in the USA!

As an ingredient in your beer, look for a strong vanilla aroma to go with the caramel malts and dried fruits of the quad. The flavour is said to offer up vanilla, almond, honey, caramel, cinnamon and cloves. This adds to the rich chocolate and caramel malts, raisins, brown sugar and gentle spice.

It is rich and sweet, but dries out to leave a lovely spicy finish with those rich boozy, warm flavours lingering pleasantly.

Style: Quadrupel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.1% (2.37 Std Drinks)



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Kasteelbier Tripel

Sometimes we tend to overlook the heritage brands, always on the hunt for the newest beers. But it is nice to go back a beer from a brewery that has been quietly doing its thing since 1865.

Now under the guidance of the 7th generation of the family Van Honsebrouck, 'The Castle' brewery continues to make their specialty beers.

The Kasteelbier Tripel will lay claim to being one of Belgium's strongest tripels. (To be honest, almost all of the Kasteel beers are big on the ABV. It makes it a tricky brewery visit to drive home after!)

It pours a lovely golden colour with a fluffy white foam. Lots of that classic Belgian yeast aroma is complimented by a fruity sweetness. In the mouth the beer is at first quite sweet with a big malt backbone, peach and citrus fruit and the Belgian candi sugar used in most tripels.

The yeast is spicy and a little savoury giving off coriander, clove, banana and a grassy hop note. There is enough hop bitterness to offset some of that sweet malt body, to leave a full and rich aftertaste, backed by a lingering bitter bite and alcohol warmth.



Style: Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij van Honsebrouck

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



Tsar Canon

This is a three-way collaboration brewed at Brouwerij Kees early last year, which involved brewers from Velka Morava in Russian, and our good friends from Alvinne. And it isn't a sour beer!

The name is a reference to the gigantic gun – Tzar Pouchka – known as the king of guns. It defends the Kremlin in Moscow but has never been used.

The beer pours a thick black, viscous liquid with an aroma heavy on roasted malts and bourbon from the barrel ageing. It smells like a really big and rich beer.

And it is. There is an initial sweetness that doesn't last long giving way to a dark chocolate bitterness, with really roasted malts and a hint of smoke that is probably from the barrel. Dark red stone fruits, chocolate, charcoal and a little smoked meat flavour is all thrown into the mix.

It finishes pretty dry for such a big beer, with an aftertaste that lingers long and full.

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij Kees

Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.2% (2.92 Std Drinks)

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