

Belgoo Saisonneke

It wasn't that long ago that the famous Cantillon brewery was the sole representative in the Belgian capital. But Belgoo Beer is one of the growing number of new breweries taking up residence in the Brussels.

The city is now home to eight breweries, brewing beers from pale ales to sours, the heritage of a brewery like Cantillon to the modern, boundary-pushing creations of Brussels Beer Project.

This beer from Belgoo Beer is something of an homage to both the traditional saisons of Belgium and the new world low-ABV tasty pale ales or session IPA's that have found favour in the UK; taking the main attributes of each style and melding those into a very drinkable ale.

The aroma offers a moderately bretty, earthy hop character supported by a grainy malt body. The addition of wheat to the malt bill lightens the body for a crisp mouthfeel. European Noble hops add a combination earthy spiciness to the controlled bitterness, with a prickly, dry finish.



Style: Saison
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Belgoo Beer
Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.4% (1.15 Std Drinks)

Mokke Blond

If you ever find yourself looking for a good restaurant, or even just a place to enjoy a beer in Leura in the Blue Mountains, you could do a lot worse than stopping in at Flemish Flavours. It is a Belgian restaurant owned and operated by Belgian chef Wim and his wife Claire.

Not content with serving up some of the Belgian classics at his restaurant, Wim along with his cousin-by-marriage (whose name is also Wim), took over the Belgian beer label Mokke Bier which commenced operations in 2015.

Their first beer is the Blond, which presents as a normal Belgian blond with a slightly sweet malt body with coriander and citrus. It goes a little off-piste with the hint of added honey, then a subtle but gently building hint of saison funk.

At first I thought this to be a pretty standard Belgian Blond, a little on the sweeter side thanks in part to the addition of the honey. It was as the beer warmed a little that the flavours became more pronounced and I started getting the background hits of the barnyard yeast character.

It finishes reasonably dry with a lingering citrus and hop bitterness, and the subtle yeast character inviting you back for another taste.

Belgian Blond
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Mokke Bier
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)



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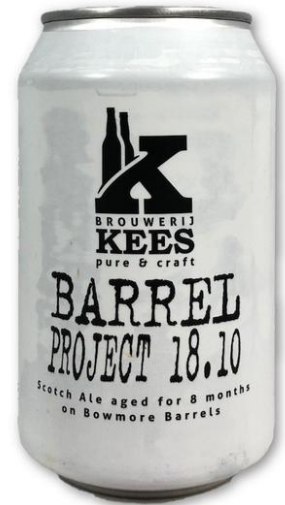
Kees Barrel Project 18.10

Barrel Project is the rather appropriate name chosen by Kees for his special beers aged in barrels. He started doing this back in 2015 when he began brewing beers under his own label.

Invariably the beers chosen are the bigger, stronger beer styles – imperial stouts and barley wines being the norm. But it was nice to pick up this beer which is a Scotch Ale, which may also be called a Wee Heavy, aged for eight months in Bowmore Whiskey barrels.

It has a sweet roasted malt aroma, with a little fruit against the background of the whiskey barrel. Early sweetness in the flavour is of toasted malt, raisins and a touch of chocolate. The peat of the whiskey slides in behind to provide a smokiness that slowly becomes more evident.

There is no obvious bitterness, rather the peaty smoke performs the balancing act, without ever getting too peaty. Definitely one for the whiskey fans, but not something to be put off by if you aren't.



Style: Scotch Ale
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Kees
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5% (2.21 Std Drinks)

Uiltje Dr Raptor

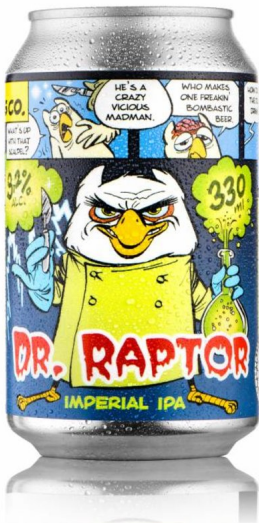
First made in 2016, this beer has been 're-engineered' more than once over that time, (as well as going from bottles to cans) but still retains the status as being the hoppiest of Uiltje's core range beers.

The good doctor is an imperial IPA that contains most of the hop varieties you've ever heard of: Cascade, Simcoe, Mosaic, Nelson-Sauvin, Chinook, Amarillo, Centennial and Citra. No wonder then that it has an inviting tropical fruit aroma full of pineapple, grapefruit, mango and pine.

A solid caramel malt base provides the backbone for all those hops. There is a sweetness to the malt, such that all those hops – as well as the considerable ABV – are covered off really well.

This will be one of those big IPA's that lend themselves to becoming something of a barley wine as the hops drop off. But for now, the hops are doing their job. Enjoy this very tasty, really well balanced offering from Uiltje.

Style: Double IPA
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.2% (2.40 Std Drinks)



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De Molen Negen & Een

We've held onto this beer since late last year. It was another of the De Molen 2018 Boreft Festival beers, which was the 10th year of the event.

De Molen always ask their guest brewers to make (at least) one special beer just for the festival. This year, the theme was '9+1' to celebrate the 10th year of the festival.

The idea was that De Molen sent a recipe to all the brewers and asked them to add one additional ingredient to that recipe. This beer includes aloe vera as the extra ingredient, which interestingly was chosen for its effect on the mouthfeel rather than any flavour effect. Anita – a nutritional therapist – said aloe vera has an acidic bitterness in raw form, so I was waiting for this to hit on my first taste.

The beer is a full-bodied imperial stout which pours thick and really quite still. A sweet base offers chocolate, brown sugar, lightly roasted malts and molasses. There is also a slightly nutty, slight vegetal note which I would have no hope of picking as aloe vera.

A really smooth and creamy mouthfeel is indeed achieved, with the beer drying out a little as it goes which a soft bitterness on the finish.

Style: Imperial Stout
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.7% (3.05 Std Drinks)



Alvinne Cuvée de Mortagne Sauternes

It's an unmistakably Alvinne bottle in the packs again, but those who aren't fans of the sour, please don't despair. This is something a little different from Alvinne.

Land van Mortagne is one of the base beers. It is nominally classed as a quadrupel, but pushes some boundaries of a big barley wine. (And is then confused by the use of the crazy Morpheus yeast)

Cuvée de Mortagne is the barrel aged version of the beer, rested in red wine barrels such as Pomerol, St Emilion, Margaux. The really special version of the Cuvée de Mortagne is then added to a different barrel. This beer has spent a further year in Sauternes white wine barrels.

It smells big and sweet, slightly fruity and funky. The flavour is a pretty complex combination of a multitude of things. Initially sweet with plums, raisins, cherries, caramel malt, dark sugar and fortified wine. A little sour acidity grips the sides of the tongue for a short time before the warm, smooth fruit and malt body takes over again.

It finishes reasonable dry, with a long slightly bitter, slightly sour, somewhat sweet aftertaste that hangs on the tongue and in the throat for a good while. Rest, repeat!

Style: Quadrupel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Alvinne
Alcohol Content (ABV): 12.8% (3.33 Std Drinks)



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