

Cuvee des Trolls

Brasserie Dubuisson is the oldest brewery still operating in Wallonia, celebrating its 250th birthday this year. And in 2000 they partnered with a restaurateur to create the little brew pub Microbrewery Brasse-Temps in the university town of Mons.

The first beer produced there was Cuvee des Trolls. The intention was to provide the young student population with a sessionable beer that bridged the gap between the commercial Eurp plisners and lagers and the range of specialty Belgian beers.

So this is actually a lager, though the sessionability is surely compromised by the 7% ABV. Regardless it was an instant success, and is now part of the core range of Dubuisson.

Unfiltered, it is a slightly cloudy yellow straw colour, with an aroma of citrus and Belgian yeast. Dried orange peel is added to the boil to accentuate the citrus flavours. They combine with a fairly crisp malt body and a grassy, herbal hop character.

It has fairly high carbonation, which makes for a light and crisp, easy drinking beer which belies that solid ABV.



Style: Belgian Pale (but not an Ale)

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie Dubuisson (also Microbrouwerij Brasse-Temps)

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.0% (1.38 Std Drinks)

De Molen Hip, Hip, HIPA!

Well this is something different from De Molen!

It is an hazy IPA with extracts of vanilla, chocolate and orange. And you really aren't left doubting what is in this beer – the aromas explode out of the bottle as you pour and it is exactly as it says on the bottle.

More of a surprise is the flavour – it absolutely tastes like a liquid Jaffa Cake!

I get the orange on my tongue as I breath in before taking a sip; there must be loads in there. The chocolate is layered nicely behind and the vanilla is in the background (at least for me).

Although I was amazed by the flavour, I wasn't exactly sure I liked this beer for the first few tastes. It has a very low carbonation, and the body is a little heavy and sticky. But the aftertaste gets me back in for another sip.

I don't know that I'll reach for this beer often, but it certainly is an interesting creation and one that immediately takes my mind back to eating Jaffa Cakes as a kid at birthday parties. It's a fun beer to try.

Style: India Pale Ale

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.9% (1.28 Std Drinks)



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De Moersleutel Of Je Hop Lust

The young brothers at De Moersleutel are focused on two broad styles of beer. The first is the big, dark and complex Russian Imperial Stouts, with an assortment of ingredients as is their habit. The second is hoppy beers, with a concentration on the ever-popular NEIPA's.

The name of this beer translates as 'whether you like hop', and for most of us I think the answer is 'yes'. Particularly so if you are a fan of Citra and Mosaic hops.

It has an inviting aroma with lots of citrus, lime, nectarine, mandarin, passionfruit, peach and pine. This follows through in the taste, with a tropical fruit sweetness filling the mouth before a pleasant bitterness joins in for a dry and lingering finish.

The bitterness is probably too obvious to truly be in the style of the fruit juice NEIPA's of the US, but I actually prefer the hazy IPA's to have some hop bite to balance things out. So don't focus on putting it in a box, rather just enjoy it for a deliciously flavoursome beer.

Style: NEIPA
Country: The Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Moersleutel
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (2.26 Std Drinks)



Maredsous Brune 8

Maredsous is an abbey found in the town of Denee near to Namur, which is a little to the south east of Belgium's geographical centre. The abbey has been around since 1892, and in 1963 they licensed the name to the Duvel Moortgat brewery to produce these abbey ales.

The beer made under the Maredsous label are classically Belgian in style, with a Belgian Pale, Blond, Brune and Tripel. The Brune 8 was originally produced as a Christmas beer, but found such favour that it was quickly made part of the core line up.

The dark ruby body offers aromas of caramel, cherries, plums, dried fruits and typical Belgian yeast character. There is an inviting sweetness full of caramel malt, that sweet fruitiness of dried dark fruits, plum, apricot, a hint of chocolate with a bit of a spicy bite thrown in.

There is a little citrus in the aftertaste which balances out the sweetness of the malt and fruity aftertaste for a nicely balanced finish.

Style: Brune
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Duvel Moortgat
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



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Cliffhanger

It has been a few months since we've featured a De Molen collaboration brew, so time to rectify that with this beer. The good people at De Molen were paid a visit by the brewing team from Poch's Cervesa Artesana; a small brewery and brew pub located in the north east of Spain in the area of Girona.

Many small, young brewers pay a visit to De Molen knowing their reputation for brewing dark beers, their use of smoked malts and their experience in barrel aging. So it is no surprise that this collab. uses smoked malt as one of the ingredients in this smoked doppelbock.

It pours a dark brown, and the waft of smoked malts immediately jump from the glass. There is also a soft fruity smell of stewed dark fruits.

Straight from the fridge, the flavours are a little subdued, but as the beer warms it opens up well. The early dark fruit sweetness gives way to roasted malts. The smoked malt is not as strong in the flavour, though definitely there. It finishes with a solid bitterness and a little roasted malt astringency that makes it dry and moreish.



Style: Smoked Doppelbock

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen/Poch's Cervesa Artesana (SPA)

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)

La Debauche Demi Mondaine

As usual, any offering by our French brewery La Debauche is notable for the striking label art, often full of subtle cultural reference or double entendre.

The term 'Demi-Monde' refers to a group of people living an hedonistic lifestyle, with 'Demimondaine' referring to a woman embodying these qualities, especially one who is supported by a wealthy lover. It later became a euphemism for a courtesan, as suggested by the label I guess!

So given the cultural background of the name, we could reasonable expect this beer to be something a little naughty and decadent. And I think the team have delivered with this beer.

It is an imperial milk stout, with the addition of coffee beans, cocoa beans and lactose.

The coffee is prominent, but more so in the aroma than the flavour. It is supported by flavours of chocolate and roasted malts in a smooth, low carbonation mouthfeel, with enough roast and hop bite to ensure the beer isn't too sweet.

Somehow the beer feels a little light bodied, cleverly covering off the substantial ABV which appears only as a gentle warming in the flavoursome, lingering finish.

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

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



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