

De Molen Summer of '19

For the past three years De Molen has made a special beer to bring in the European summer, which we then hold until a suitable time nearing our summer. And this month is time to present the Summer of '19.

It is a little berliner weisse with cranberries being the fruit addition of choice. The beer is also dry-hopped with Simcoe, Mosaic and Citra hops though the effect I get from this is minimal.

The beer pours a lovely cloudy pink, which reminds me of rose petal vodka I once drank in a Russian restaurant – that stuff was delicious!

And this beer is as well. Just a tiny hint of sour, though the effect of the cranberries is to make it more into a sweetish tartness. A thicker mouthfeel makes for a slightly heavier body than you might expect from this style of beer, though it seems to lengthen the aftertaste nicely.

Beers like this are indeed made for a warm afternoon. Enough flavour to keep the tastebuds entertained, and low enough alcohol to ensure you can make it a decent session.

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



Uiltje American Beauty

This beer is a three-way collaboration between Uiltje, Siren Craft Brew from the UK and Italian brewery Vento Forte.

I must admit I hadn't heard of this Italian brewery before, but they started back in 2013 and the name translates as 'strong wind'!

A surfer who had found a love for IPAs during a trip to California decided to start homebrewing and then went commercial. Guess his beers must go alright if he's invited to a collab. with Uiltje and Siren though.

The beer was made for the 'Freshfest' beer festival hosted by the Uiltje team, where the trio brewed up is a Double Dry-Hopped (DDH) Brut IPA which was then aged in white oak chips.

Hopped with American hops, there is a definite fruit sweetness in behind the firm bitterness. The 'Brut' element refers to the use of a 'champagne-like' yeast which eats up virtually all of the sugars. It leads to a very crisp, dry finish with the pleasant lingering bitterness.

Style: IPA (Rice Brut)
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)

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De La Senne Crianza III 2019

For fans of Brussels 'second brewery' – Brasserie De La Senne – we have become used to their beers being generously hopped, often quite bitter and usually in the lower range of ABV (at least for a Belgian brewery). This limited quantity beer is something of a surprise in terms of style, but a really interesting and tasty beer.

This beer is described as being a mixed fermentation ale. That means that the beer has been fermented using a combination of regular brewers yeast and some other less conventional yeasts and/or microbes (eg. wild *Brettanomyces*, *Lactobacillus*, *Pediococcus*, etc). Morpheus yeast from Alvinne is a great example of this.

In this case, the beer is brewed with a normal yeast then placed into oak barrels for a year, where it is exposed to *Brettanomyces* and other goodies in the barrel.

The result is a slightly acidic, slightly funky and quite woods character to the beer. There is some fruit sweetness, and a bit of a tart note like dark cherries. A lot to explore in the flavour and even texture of this beer, it may be a little challenging for those that don't enjoy 'sour' beers. But persist and you may be rewarded with a greater appreciation in the end.



Style: Flanders Red Ale
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brasserie De La Senne
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.4% (1.93 Std Drinks)

De Moersleutel Rusty

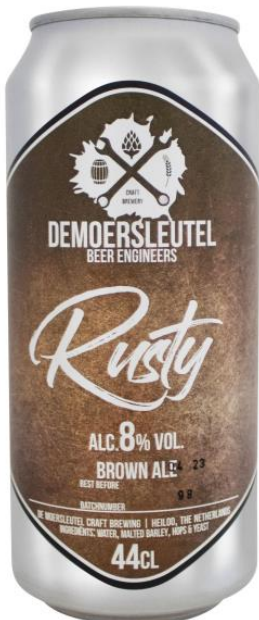
When we think of De Moersleutel it is usually either for hazy hoppy beers, or their big tasty imperial stouts. To have a beer that sits somewhere in the middle is an interesting proposition.

The American Brown Ale is a style that we don't see so often in Australia, though it is a very popular style in the US (naturally!). For me they have a good dose of both hops and malt to enjoy. And with this being an imperial version, it means all the good bits are amplified.

The dark brown malt body gives of lots of flavours to enjoy. Dark chocolate, roasted malts, coffee, brown sugar and even a hint of dark dried fruit. Then the hops join the party to provide an earthiness, a hint of grassy spice and a medium to firm bitterness that lingers in the aftertaste.

It is the sort of beer that will evolve as you drink it as well, so note how the bitterness seems firmer when the beer is colder, with the lovely malt character slowly taking over as the beer warms.

Style: Imperial American Brown Ale
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Moersleutel
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.78 Std Drinks)



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Kerstpater Van Den Bossche

This beer has been tucked away at the back of our cool room since the start of the year. Most of the Belgian Christmas beers are only released late October or November, so miss our last container for the year. To ensure we have some suitably festive beers at this time of year, we keep a couple back for inclusion at the appropriate time.

So let the festive season begin with this Kerst Pater Special Christmas Beer from Brouwerij Van Den Bossche. The brewery is most known for the Pater Lieven beers (of which we've featured a few), or the Buffalo Belgian Stout. But this seasonal beer is always one to look out for each year.

It has many of the traditional dark beer flavours like chocolate, a hint of coffee, raisins, plums or prunes, brown sugar, red berries and more. It is different to many Christmas beers in that the spicing is very subdued. Not much to pick out really, though the hops do give a little earthy note to the moderate bitterness that bites back just enough to offset the sweetness.

Style: Christmas Beer (Kerstbier)
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Van Den Bossche
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.0% (2.34 Std Drinks)



La Debauche Nuclear Winter

This is the strongest beer we've ever included in our beer packs!

Nuclear Winter is a beast of a barley wine, coming in at 16% ABV. It pours quite a dark brown colour – much darker than you'd expect for a barley wine – and it settles very quickly to be almost still.

Straight away there is lots of dark dried fruit aromas, as well as chocolate, dark (almost slightly burnt caramel) and some leathery Brettanomyces character.

This all follows through in the flavour, along with a strong oak character. The beer has been aged in oak for 18 months, and there is a really dominant oak astringency in behind all the sweet fruits and malts. The Brett. character comes through more in the aftertaste.

Interestingly the beer finishes very dry for such a big malt bomb. And although there is certainly a warming from the alcohol it is super-well disguised. Not often you can describe a 16% beer as very drinkable, but this beer really is.

La Debauche don't really get enough love (in Australia at least) considering how good so many of their beers are, and that is over a full spectrum of beer styles. Really clever work from France's best rated craft brewer.

Style: Barley Wine
Country: France
Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche
Alcohol Content (ABV): 16.0% (4.17 Std Drinks)

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