

Brussels Beer Projects Juice Junkie

Brussels Beer Project are no longer the new kids on the (Brussels) block, having been around since 2013. But they are still operating in a different way to most Belgian breweries.

With their small brewery and tap room in the centre of Brussels, they get many of their beers brewed at the Proef Brewery near Ghent. They also make a point of doing collaborations with an assortment of brewers.

This beer started life as a collaboration with Weird Beard from the UK. Originally it was a bit higher in ABV, and with a different yeast. BBP have changed this beer since then to make it their own – in cans, too!

Lots of tropical fruit aroma and flavour with pineapple, mango, citrus and floral character from the Simcoe, Mosaic, Nelson Sauvin and Citra hops.

The addition of oat flakes add a little softness to the body, but there is still a reasonable amount of bitterness to this beer (too much to be a NEIPA for me!), that lingers with the fruity character in the aftertaste.



Style: NEIPA

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brussels Beer Project (De Proefbrouwerij)

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.4% (1.41 Std Drinks)

Siphon Brewing Krypton

If you've stayed in Bruges and felt adventurous enough to go for a cycle outside of the city walls, chances are you ended up in Damme. A small town about a 15 minute ride following a canal tow-path, it is a quaint little place with a few bars and restaurants, and lots of book shops. And since 2016 it is also home to a 500 litre microbrewery.

The realisation of the shared passions of friends, this brewery was awarded 'Best New Brewery in Belgium 2017'. Not a bad entrance to the market!

The brewery aims to produce classic Belgian styles with a twist. And so this beer proves to be. At heart this is a Belgian witbier, though a little heavier in body and alcohol than the typical offering. It has the witbier yeast character with banana and vanilla notes, and some rather fruity hops as well.

To the beer is added the juice of Blood Oranges, evidenced in the slight tartness in the taste. The beer is hopped with Citra and Mandarina Bavaria hops, so the citrus flavour is further accentuated.

Brewed in collaboration with Brouwerij Contrerars (BEL) and White Frontier Brewery of Switzerland, this beer is a pretty tasty offering. Light and easy drinking, but with enough flavour to keep things interesting until the finish.

Style: Witbier

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Siphon Brewing

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



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Kees Sera Sera

Kees Bubberman started his new brewery some 5 years ago. I regard him as one of our most creative brewers, both in terms of the beers he concocts as well as the names he christens them with.

When we were ordering our beers for the container recently arrived, this beer drew a little snigger and a knowing 'ah, of course'. How did it take such a creative chap so long to come up with this name? It is perfect!

So what is the beer behind this name – it is a double dry hopped IPA, with one hop.

Two things are of note for this beer. Firstly, the hop is an experimental hop from Yakima Valley Hops in the US. Yet to be given a name, HBC472 is the 'accession number' assigned to this little bloke. The aroma is generally of tropical fruits like citrus and grapefruit. But there is something else and it is more prominent in the taste. The notes suggest the intriguing character of coconut and wood, often evolving into a bourbon barrel aged character.

The malt of choice is Golden Promise, which I know from many years back at the Fullers Brewery when I was given my first Golden Pride barley wine. A really rich malt body with a little sweetness brings me straight back to that occasion.

It is a juicy, nearly marmalade'y IPA with a soft and slightly sweet body, with just the faintest hop prickle on the finish. Not your average IPA, but an interesting beer.

Style: NEIPA

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij Kees

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.0% (1.82 Std Drinks)



De Moersleutel Smoke Screen



Smoked beers are sometimes a little divisive. Somehow people's responses to such beers are very much either love or not. There is little ground for indifference. So it is with a little trepidation that we include this beer in our beer packs (and it is a big can and all!)

The pour leaves little wondering as to what this beer is about. Smoked ham hock is what I immediately think of (and wouldn't mind it accompanying).

A dark brown, slightly murky body continues to give off the smoky aroma as long as the liquid lasts in the glass. There is an inviting early sweetness to the beer, with dark chocolate and caramel, even a little dark sugar and a soft carbonation makes for a smooth mouthfeel.

While the smoked meat character is stronger in the aroma than it is in the flavour, I still found the urge to chew on each mouthful of this beer. Let it warm to get the best of the smokiness, which is really well balanced and (at least for me) not overpowering at all. I look forward to the reviews!

Style: Stout (Smoked)

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Moersleutel

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.78 Std Drinks)

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La Debauche Nevermore

Sitting down to enjoy a beer from our French brewery La Debauche is often a more cultural experience than you may have planned for. The label art on their bottles is both attractive and intriguing. It can take a few minutes to analyse the label, looking for a hidden meaning, cultural reference or simply a hint from the brewery as to what the beer you are about to enjoy should be.

'Nevermore' is the word muttered by 'The Raven' in the Edgar Allan Poe's poem from the mid-nineteenth century. It is a tale of loss and despair, with the raven symbolising a dark and sorrowful state of being.

The beer is dark and imposing, but that is where the despair ends. It is a rich imperial stout, aged with American oak from bourbon barrels.

Dark chocolate, cocoa, roasted malts, caramel, coffee, licorice, vanilla and a hint of sweet bourbon meld well with the medium hop bitterness. This lifts up the body, with an earthy minerality drying the beer on the finish for a really well balanced and dangerously drinkable beer.

Go on – read the poem while you are sipping on this beer!



Style: Imperial Stout

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.5% (2.47 Std Drinks)

De Molen Verdeel & Heers

We've been hoarding a few of these bottles for quite some time now, as you'll see the beer was bottled back in January 2017!

It is a combination of De Molen's Hel & Verdoemenis (flagship Imperial Stout) and their Hemel & Aarde (Imperial Stout with peaty malt). A blend of these beers was then added to several different barrels. And just to make things interesting, the barrels were spiked with a wild *Brettanomyces* yeast.

When you have two whole floors full of various beers aging in varied barrels, De Molen have a lot to play with. And it is a game they generally play really well.

The aroma is predominantly peaty, though as the beer warms some sweetness comes through more strongly. It is also there in the flavour, coming in fast behind the initial sweetness. Because we know to look for it, I reckon you can detect a little leathery note from the Brett, but I probably wouldn't notice it if not looking for it. There is also some barrel character with some woody tannins.

For a rich beer, it finishes quite dry with a little prickly hop bitterness in the lingering aftertaste, which retains the charry, peaty roast malt character. We've waited a good while to see if the Brett. would kick in, but it doesn't seem to be that strong. We'll just enjoy it for what it is.

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen

Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.8% (2.55 Std Drinks)



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