

Kees Hazy Sunrise (Version II)

We had a beer of the same name back in the November 2017 beer club packs. It was just after Kees first moved into cans, but his entire range is now filled into these little mini kegs.

And although the can is completely different in colour and appearance, he's chosen to recycle the name of that original beer.

As before, the Hazy Sunrise is a hazy IPA – and I'm still resisting a little in using the 'NEIPA' tag. This iteration features Citra, Mosaic and Loral hops giving the beer a lovely bouquet filled with tropical fruits notes.

There is an early dose of sweetness to this beer which is really tropical with mango, papaya, mandarin and pine. The mouthfeel is quite soft, with only a very gentle bitterness coming through at the end.

Its really juicy, and doesn't really hint at the 7.1% ABV. Not quite a NEIPA in the true sense, and the flavours might be a little muted from the very soft mouthfeel, but an enjoyable offering for this version.



Style: NEIPA
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Kees
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.1% (1.85 Std Drinks)

Verhaeghe Barbe Noel



We've been waiting to get some of Verhaeghe's special Christmas beer for a few years now, but have always been too late pre-ordering this beer in time for the Christmas container. This year we were organised but the container was delayed!

I thought about keeping this beer til next Christmas, but that is a long while to wait. And besides, this isn't the most Christmasy of Belgian Christmas beers, so suits being included in the warmer months.

It is one of the rare blonde Belgian Christmas beers (I can only think of two others I've had), rather than the traditionally dark offerings that are much more common.

The beer is first 'lagered' for 14 days before a refermentation process. It is then allowed to age until fermentation reaches the required alcohol level. Lightly roasted malts give the golden appearance along with the bready malt flavour.

There is a slight fruit sweetness early on that is quickly overwhelmed by the hop bitterness along with some gentle herb and spice. Wheat malts adds to the crisp mouthfeel, with notes of orange peel, lemon grass and a herbal minerality.

The finish is reasonably bitter, dry and slightly herbaceous with a little hint of alcohol warmth.

Style: Christmas Beer (Blonde)
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Verhaeghe
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.2% (1.87 Std Drinks)

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De Molen Warm & Knus

Something a little different here from De Molen. Although it is a slightly odd thing to say about a brewery that produces such a range of beers.

But I can't think of another American Brown Ale that we've had from them over the past 6 years or more, so it is different enough.

American Brown Ales are a great style of beer, though sadly we don't see too many of them in our local market. Characterised by a balance of roasted and chocolate malts with a firm bitterness, this style offers a little of something for everyone.

This beer pours a deep chestnut colour, and gives off notes of chocolate, toffee, burnt toast and a little nuttiness. These all follow through in the flavour. Initially sweetness from the chocolate and toffee malt, giving way to a roasted malt bite and a firm bitterness that carries through to the finish. And because it is De Molen, there is always that little bit more of everything, so it's an Imperial American Brown.

A style attributed to the homebrewers of America, creating their own style based loosely on the brown ales and porters, but of course with a lot more hops; as is the American way.



Style: Brown Ale
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.9% (2.06 Std Drinks)

De Koninck Tripel D'Anvers

When we first started visiting Belgium, the De Koninck Tripel was one of our favourite beers. It was a readily available offering that easily pleased. Then in the late 2000's they stopped making this beer.

The tripel was reintroduced in 2010 under this name, which basically translates to the 'Tripel of Antwerp'. As we've said before, tripels are Belgium's equivalent of the Pale Ale in Australia. It is basically the first beer most breweries will make (with varying degrees of success – just like our Pale Ales!) so to announce this beer as THE tripel of Antwerp is a bold claim.

It pours a lovely golden colour, and has that unmistakable Belgian yeast character floating up through the foamy white head.

On tasting, there is the nice mix of pale and caramel malts for a solid, if slightly sweet, malt backbone. Saaz hops provide the bitterness and lift the mouthfeel of the beer away from the sweetness. Very easy to drink for the ABV, imagine sitting by the cathedral in Antwerp's Old Town square, and take in the taste of the city.

Style: Tripel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij De Koninck (Duvel-Moortgat)
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



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Zundert 10

Brouwerij Kievit is the second of the Trappist Monasteries in The Netherlands. Although it has existed as a monastery since 1938, it was formerly operated as a cattle farm. Finally deciding this business was too labour intensive for the small number of monks, they opted to start a brewery as the means of earning funds to keep the monastery and go about their local charitable endeavours.

So in December 2013 they brought their first (and only at that time) beer to market – the Zundert 8 Tripel. It wasn't until 2018 that they were confident enough in their newly found brewing skills to introduce a second beer.

Zundert 10 is a big Belgian Strong Dark Ale, or we'll agree to the US convention of labelling it as a quadrupel.

It has a really yeasty aroma, that seems stronger than it does in the flavour. A really malty beer, this has a dark and sweet character with toffee, caramel, figs and raisins. The beer dries out toward the finish, with a noticeable hop bitterness lifting the mouthfeel.

Quite a rich and luxurious beer, designed to be sipped and savoured.

Style: Quadrupel

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Trappistenbrouwerij De Kievit

Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



La Debauche Black Phillip

When we last ordered beers from La Debauche, they were very keen for us to try some of their more daring creations. And the Black Phillip would definitely fall into that category.

The label design is based on the film *The Witch* – a supernatural horror film that follows a family who encounter forces of evil on the outskirts of their farm. The link in the film is the line 'Wouldst thou like to live deliciously?'

It is an imperial stout of 10%, barrel aged and spiked with wild *Brettanomyces* yeast. So we have 2 (or even 3) big character elements vying for attention in this one beer. My thoughts are that we will get some varied feedback with this one!

From the pour the beer is pitch black with a thick tan head. The beer is really very lively for a stout, so we'd recommend no long pours.

Straight away the brett is noticeable in the aroma. Earthy, leathery funk that sits side by side with the more usual chocolate, caramel and roasted malt character.

It is kind of sweet but quickly turns a little sour and funky. In the background is coffee, tobacco, dark chocolate and the bit of acidity that seems to build in the complex, bitter finish.

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



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