

Siphon Brewing Argon

A couple of months back, we had the Siphon Brewing Krypton, which a lot of people enjoyed. And as with that beer, this beer is a collaboration with a couple of local brewers. Most are familiar with Kaapse Brouwers from Rotterdam in The Netherlands, but only our oldest beer members may remember Brouwerij De Ryck.

So two Belgian brewers and one Dutch brewer, they've co-created a pretty tasty little Speciale Belge.

This beer style is a bit old school, but finding something of a resurgence in the Belgian beer market. It kind of fills the space between traditional PILS and the more flavoursome Belgian ales. The De Koninck we had recently is a great example of this style.

Amber in colour, this beer celebrates the malty goodness of a traditional Speciale Belge. But this beer has been hopped a lot more than normal. Citra, Simcoe and Mandarin Bavaria hops have been added late as well as for dry hopping. They add a lovely bitterness to the taste, plus a marmalade and fruit character.



Style: Speciale Belge

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Siphon Brewing (collab. with Kaapse Brouwers and Brouwerij De Ryck)

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

Echt Kriekenbier

If you draw a line vertically down between Bruges and Ghent, that is basically the border between East and West Flanders. And roughly on that line, down toward the French border is Brouwerij Verhaeghe. It has been there since 1875!

No surprise then that they produce what Belgium calls typical Flanders Ales – malty base beers of mixed fermentation, soured in barrels, often with real fruits added. And that is what this beer is – a Flemish Kriek.

It starts life as a normal reddish brown ale which is then moved into oak barrels for a long maturation (between 1-2 years).

Around July each year, the northern cherries are harvested from the area around Sint-Truiden. Around 150g of these fresh cherries per litre of beer are then laid on the base beer. When maturation in the barrels is deemed done, barrels of various age are blended to ensure a consistency of flavour from batch to batch.

Sweet up front, there is dark fruits and malt, giving in to a slightly sour tartness that rolls over the back of the tongue with that cherry bite and a hint of vanilla from the oak and a very pleasant acidity.



Style: Kriek

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Verhaeghe

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.8% (1.34 Std Drinks)

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Uiltje El Chapo

I'm starting to think that Uiltje and Bierol from Austria might have a 'thing' going on, as this is the second collaboration between these two breweries we've had in the last year!

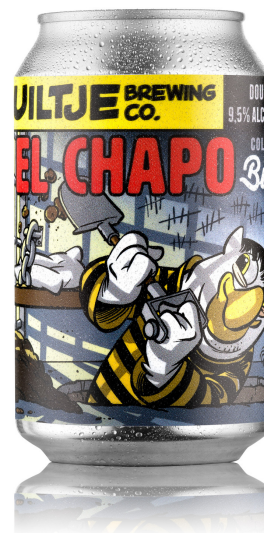
Apparently they both made beers called 'El Patron', so to quell any disputes they decided to make a beer together; and we have this.

A double IPA with lots of hops, seven different varieties in fact. Magnum, Cascade, Chinook, Amarillo, Citra, Mosaic and Simcoe. It's a bit hard to pick out any particular hop attribute, so we'll generalise with 'lots of tropical fruit' character!

Pilsner malt and wheat make for the backbone, which is quite firmly malty and somewhat dense but somehow light on the palate. It makes for a dangerously drinkable double IPA, that should take a little longer to polish off than it does.

Keep the collab's coming boys and girls, dig El Chapo!

Style: Double IPA
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Het Uiltje
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.5% (2.47 Std Drinks)



Kees Indian Summer Dopplebock

Kees first made this beer a couple of year ago (2018), and I was intrigued as soon as I saw it. Dopplebocks are very much a style I enjoy, but an 'Indian Summer' version seemed something of a paradox.

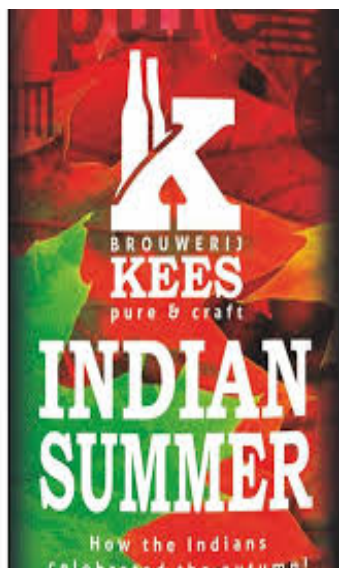
Being a European autumn seasonal, not everything fits into our container schedules, so we've all had to wait a while to taste this beer.

It's changed a little since the first incarnation, with the ABV increasing and the hopping regime changing. The version we have is late 2019.

A rich malt body, quite heavy on the tongue but satisfyingly smooth. Flavours of caramel, dark dried fruit, prunes, raisins, brown sugar. The twist with this beer is the use of a smoked malt giving that hint of wood smoke.

This smoke is more obvious in the flavour, more than just background noise. Quite rich and malty, a little fruity, clean lager yeast. Hallertau and Magnum hops. And pretty easy drinking for the alcohol content.

Style: Dopplebock
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij Kees
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



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De Molen Before & After

Another of De Molen's 2019 Boreft Festival beers, and this is where they really get to have some fun with their creations. I reckon this was one of my favourites.

It is the quintessential dessert beer – and after dinner mint in a glass. What's not to like?!!

At its heart this is an imperial stout, made from five different malts. With the addition of chocolate nibs and fresh mint, it takes this from solid to decadent.

Dark chocolate, cocoa, rich roasted malt, a hint of the mint but loads of chocolate in the aroma. Which pretty much follows through in the taste. It isn't quite as rich and thick as you might expect from the nose. The thinner body seems to make it more drinkable, its really easy to enjoy.

A good job of combining the classic dessert flavour matches into this beer. A touch more mint would top it off for me.



Style: Imperial Stout
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.8% (2.29 Std Drinks)

De Moersleutel Going Real Nuts

This beer from De Moersleutel is perfect for our current isolation/home detention, because at a whopping 12% ABV – and in a big can to boot – you ain't driving anywhere after having this bad boy!

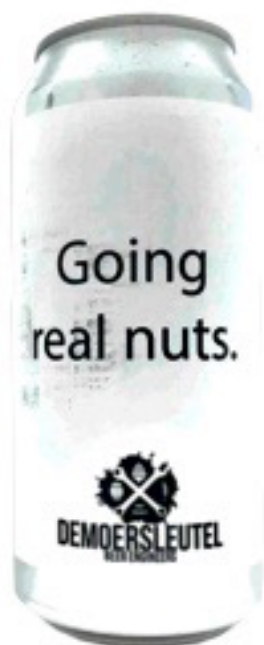
We are used to big, tasty beers from these guys, and almost always really well executed. This beer is no exception (personal preferences aside).

Pour it without reading the notes, and no prizes for guessing it is an imperial stout (with cacao nibs and roasted peanuts), as the pitch black liquid slowly glugs out of the can like old engine oil from the sump. The usual imperial stout aromas - dark chocolate, roasted malts, a little coffee, a hint of licorice, a faint smoke whisper, vanilla, cocoa – are all present.

Following through in the flavour, it is pretty sweet without ever being too much so. The roasted malt astringency and hop presence reign in any runaway sweet flavours. Its quite soft in the mouth, and while you know it has some alcohol behind it, the truth is remarkably well hidden.

The only thing for me is I really don't get much of the peanut character. Given I know it is there, I'm looking for it and I can probably get a touch more in the aroma than the flavour. As a straight up (Russian) Imperial Stout, I really like it as a beer. Others I've shared this beer with say they get the peanuts, so it must be me!

Style: Imperial Stout
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij De Moersleutel
Alcohol Content (ABV): 12.0% (4.16 Std Drinks)



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