

Witkap Stimulo Blond

If you ever find yourself in the East Flanders region of Belgium, and fancy a brewery tour, keep Brouwerij Slaghmuylder in mind. It is considered to have one of the best preserved breweries in Belgium, having created a museum exhibition of their old steam powered brewery. It is fascinating to see the old system, still with all its moving parts.

And if you are really lucky, your guide might be head brewer Karel, who in his spare time blends lambic under the De Cam label.

As we've seen from previous Witkap beers, they are very traditional in style, and this beer is no different. A Belgian Blond is often the first beer in the classic Belgian Blond-Dubbel-Tripel-Quad hierarchy. The Blond is also referred to as the 'Single'.

Pouring a hazy orange-gold colour, at once you are greeted with the aroma of the Belgian yeast. Banana, clove, bread, a little citrus and other spice.

An initial fruit and malt sweetness gives in to a pleasant bitterness, with hints of citrus and spice. Good carbonation lightens the mouthfeel of this beer, making for a thirst-quenching tipple.

Style: Belgian Blond

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Slaghmuylder

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



La Debauche Magic Baboon

Strap yourself in for this beer from La Debauche. I'm putting on the hard hat waiting for some of the feedback!

This is a fruited gose, so here is the customary sour beer warning for those that haven't yet found favour with the 'mouth'puckerers'.

A gose is a beer style from the town of Goslar in Germany. Wheat accounts for at least 50% of the grain bill, and the flavour profile is citrus and salt. It may not immediately sound that appealing, but find a sunny beer garden on a warm afternoon, and these beers are just the trick.

As has been the trend for a few years now, most gose's we see are fruited – its now quite uncommon to see a standard gose. This one from La Debauche has cucumber and key lime.

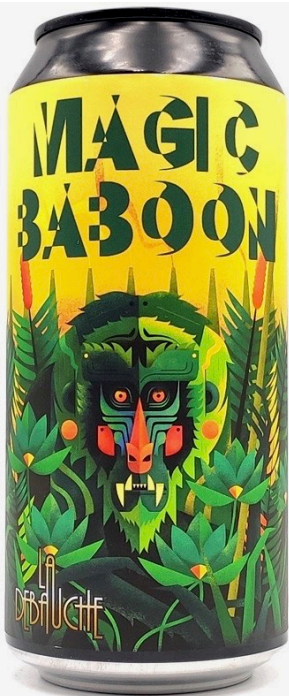
The aroma reminds me of dill pickles, with the citrus laying in behind. And the flavour pretty much follows suit. Heavy on the cucumber with the salty citrus in the background. Super refreshing (but surely divisive!)

Style: Gose

Country: France

brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.2% (1.46 Std Drinks)



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Uiltje Mojo Jo-Juice

A new shipment means lots of new Uiltje beers, and of course more of their amazing can art!

The brewers describe this beer as follows: 'A Powerpuff New England IPA fruitier than the animated #girlpower series we're riffing on. A mysterious and sinister tropical IPA with a criminal amount of passion fruit and mango'.

The ingredients of this beer are pilsner malt, wheat malt and flaked oats, which give that fuller, creamier mouthfeel (without the need for lactose). Mosaic, Simcoe and Ekuanot make up the hop bill, and provide the tropical fruit characteristics of passionfruit, lemon, lime and orange citrus, pine, papaya. And for good measure there is passionfruit and mango added.

The mouthfeel is juicy, with strong passionfruit flavour and that thick mango nectar texture that seems to coat the tongue with all the tropical fruit flavours.

But there is also a nice hob bitterness to the back end of this beer, and it lingers in company with the fruit flavours. For me, it is more bitter than a classic NEIPA, but it is the balanced bitterness on the finish that makes this a much more enjoyable beer.

Style: NEIPA

Country: Netherlands

Brewer: Brasserie het Uiltje

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.6% (2.29 Std Drinks)



De La Senne/Pravda Schieve Kolos



This beer is a collaborative brew between Belgium's De La Senne brewery, and the utterly unique-sounding Pravda Beer Theatre from the Ukraine.

Situated in the centre of the city of Lviv, in a 20th century theatre building, the brewery features its own brass band that performs most nights for the enjoyment of the beer drinkers. Sounds like a place that would be well worth a visit (when that is possible again!)

The beer they created is a saison, using rye, spelt and wheat, and dry-hopped with a Ukrainian hop called Zachrava.

A cloudy straw colour, with a herbal aroma and a light farmhouse yeast. The body is of grainy cereal, not really sweet at all but with a hint of fruit in the background.

The beer is dry, with a sustained herbal bitterness that lasts through the beer. In the aftertaste is a little citrus note. Interesting and refreshing.

Style: Saison

Country: Belgium/Ukraine

Brewer: Brasserie De La Senne/Pravda Beer Theatre

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.7% (1.48 Std Drinks)

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Rochefort Tripel Extra

This is my most eagerly awaited beer from our last container. It was quite big news when Rochefort announced the release of their Tripel in October last year. It might only be once in a generation that one of Belgium's Trappist Monasteries release a new beer; the demand for this beer was huge!

15 monks are responsible for brewing the three famous Rochefort beers, the recipes for which have remained unchanged since the 1960's. Old monastery records showed that an extra strong blond beer was indeed produced in the 1920's, but it didn't prove that popular.

Roughly a century later, Rochefort are again producing an extra strong blond beer; and it's a beauty!

It presents as a lovely yellow-gold liquid, with a fluffy pure white foam. The aroma is strongly of citrus and spice with that typical Belgian yeast.

With much anticipation the first taste is delicious. A really smooth mouthfeel is a little surprising, with a definite citrus flavour and an obviously spicy tingle that persists laid over the biscuity malt body. There is more fruitiness in the aftertaste – mango? – and that pleasant lingering peppery yeast note.

The hype was there, but this really is a good tripel.

Style: Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Abbaye Notre-Dame de Saint-Remy

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.1% (2.11 Std Drinks)



Val-Dieu Grand Cru

The Abbey of Val-Dieu has a typically interesting history, celebrating 800 years of being back in 2016. The abbey has served many purposes over the centuries, but in terms of beer the recent history started in 1997.

It was then that a brewer and a milk trader teamed up to establish what is now known as Brasserie Val-Dieu. Previously beers under the Val-Dieu label were brewed by Van Steenberge and Piron, but they were brought back in house.

As we've mentioned before, generally the term 'Grand Cru' represents the premier beer of a Belgian brewers range, and this is the case here.

It's a big, rich Belgian quadrupel. Loads of roasted malt character both in the aroma and flavour are the dominant feature. There is the traditional sweetness with hints of chocolate, dark sugar and dark fruit. Hops from Germany and the Czech Republic provide the balance, and offer a gentle spicy note to the aftertaste.

It is exactly what we've come to expect from a Belgian quadrupel.

Style: Quadrupel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie de l'Abbaye du Val-Dieu

Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.5% (2.73 Std. Drinks)



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