

De Dolle XL Pale Ale

This beer was released late in 2020 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of De Dolle Brouwers on the 15th November 1980. Hence 'XL' (40) Pale Ale!

It is made from a simple recipe of original floor-malted Simpson Maris Otter Pale Ale malt and is dry-hopped with Poperinge-grown Whitbred Golding hops with the addition of bitter orange peel. And with a nod to the past, the beer was brewed in the old 1921 copper brewhouse that Chris recovered to start his brewery.

It pours a slightly cloudy straw colour, with a fluffy white foam. The aroma is of strong Belgian yeast, citrus, grassy or herbal hops and a grainy malt. In the taste there is a little early sweetness from the malt. The peppery yeast combines with the earthy hops and good carbonation for a lively mouthfeel.

The bitter orange peel comes through from the mid-palate and continues in the aftertaste. Quite dry in the finish with a firm bitterness, it is a different beer from the usual De Dolle offerings but one I enjoyed (a few times!)

Style: Belgian Pale Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: De Dolle Brouwers

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)



Fourchette



Brouwerij van Steenberge are one of Belgium's best-known family brewers. They brew A LOT of different beers, but are probably most famous for the Gulden Draak range. Of if you've been to Bruges and visited De Garre bar, van Steenberge are responsible for that amazing house tripel as well.

In truth they brew beers for a lot of different beer companies, both in Belgium and abroad. But while they also brew this beer, the circumstances are a little more interesting.

Fourchette is brewed annually for a special gastronomic event in Ghent. Each year, a number of the country's top chefs come together to prepare a degustation for their guests.

The beer is a multi-grain tripel with Saaz and Spalt hops. The beer is really carbonated, so a slightly aggressive pour will release some of that carbonation – so pour into a big glass!

I don't really get a lot out of the aroma, there is some Belgian yeast character and a hint of light fruits, maybe banana and lemon citrus make their way through the creamy white foam.

Bubbles of flavour seem to bounce off your tongue. The beer is really lively, with a crisp backbone and hints of banana, peach, pear and coriander. It dries nicely on the finish with a pleasant lingering bitterness.

Style: Tripel

Country: Belgium

brewer: Brouwerij van Steenberge

Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5% (1.95 Std Drinks)

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Uiltje Imperial Pineapple Weizenbock

This contribution is from one of our most involved and passionate members from northern NSW. Take it away, Joe McDonald.....

The Weizenbock beer was introduced by the first family of wheat beers in 1907. Contrary to the bottom fermenting German lager (Bock), a Weizenbock is the top fermenting wheat ale version that combines characteristics of a Hefeweizen and a Doppelbock. Essentially, it is a winter wheat beer originally brewed in Bavaria, Germany.

I could smell the pineapple as soon as I pulled the can open. It poured a little cloudy, a little dark straw colour, not too much carbonation and an easy pour.

The pineapple taste is clear, but it's balanced with citrus notes, lemon I think with a lovely malty honey taste. It's got a lovely thick mouthfeel which must be the wheat/oats. It's got a little funkiness to it, but it wouldn't be Uiltje if it wasn't a little special.

It's not too sweet, not really sour and not too fruity, it's perfectly balanced yet complex. It's actually a very drinkable and refreshing beer that disguises it's 8.5%. This may not be a classic Weizenbock but when does the little Uiltje Owl do anything mainstream, as the can says....'decoding beer with a hackers list for provocation'.

Style: Weizenbock

Country: The Netherlands

Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5% (2.21 Std Drinks)



La Debauche Baltic Porter

Another beer, another style from our ever-reliable French brewery La Debauche. This time we have their Baltic Porter.

This is a style that really isn't that common to too many breweries, but one which I really enjoy when you stumble across one. Bridging the gap between a standard porter and an imperial stout, stylistic we are looking for a nice heavy dark malt body, with a welcoming malt sweetness that stops short of those really roasty characteristics of an imperial stout.

This beer is a really good example, even if it does tend more to the imperial stout end of the spectrum. Early malt sweetness lures you in with the taste of chocolate, figs, caramel, black cherries and even a little woody or nutty hint.

It is pleasantly smooth, with a soft bitterness on the back end that presents a little herbal note, or even a hint our sour on the finish.

The body is reasonably viscous, though a little more body – and the added complexity that would bring – would take this beer to the next level.

Style: Baltic Porter

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

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

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Het Nest SchuppenBoer Winter 2020 Rum Barrel-Aged

Het Nest is one of Belgium's great success stories. What started as a beer tasting club in 2000 went through the stages of home brewing club, gypsy brewer at several different breweries to owning their own brewery by 2015.

And the beer that convinced them to turn their hobby into a business was the Schuppenboer Tripel, after its award winning debut back in 2006.

They still make this beer today, and it is the base for this special 2020 vintage which has been aged in rum barrels.

Barrel aged tripels are becoming more common, and it is an interesting style to age. It seems to take on the barrel character quite easily, or more likely that it is easier to taste it underneath the base beer.

This beer has a sweetness of some yellow fruits, peach and banana. The yeast gives a herbal spiciness to the beer, and then there is some vanilla and oak from the barrel and a finish that is warming with a good bitterness in the aftertaste. The rum is strong, and probably doesn't quite meld with the beer as much as sit over the top. A little time might allow this to mellow, but it is certainly a tasty and warming winter sipper right now.

Style: Tripel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Het Nest
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



Martha Brown Eyes

The Brew Society is a Belgian organisation that was established with the intention of helping brewing entrepreneurs. Originally starting their brewing activities as gypsy brewers, they have gone on to find a home in the town of Heule, in West Flanders.

They now offer a facility for budding brewers to turn their beery dreams into reality by booking time on the brewing equipment. They also brew many beers under contract, and of course have their own line of beer that they market under the 'Martha' label.

And we've gone straight to the top with Brown Eyes, this is the Belgian style quadrupel weighing in at an impressive 12% ABV.

This was a really enjoyable beer, with two things that really stood out to me. Firstly, there was a hint of imperial stout about this beer, with roasted malts standing out a little more than in a standard Belgian quad.

The second was how easy drinking it is for the ABV – where the hell is that 12%??!! Lots of dark fruit flavours of raisin and fig, along with some cherry notes and a little licorice. Just a tasty beer that I really enjoyed (but thought better of having another!)

Style: Quadrupel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: The Brew Society
Alcohol Content (ABV): 12.0% (3.12 Std. Drinks)



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