

## Westmalle Extra

When somebody says to 'drink like a monk', well now is your chance!

This is the table beer brewed by the monks of Westmalle, used for their daily consumption and offered to official visitors to the monastery. Until recently this was not commercially available, but now it will be brewed twice a year and made available to a wider audience.

It is light and crisp, reasonably dry. A pale grainy body with a real grassy, floral, earthiness to it. The Westmalle yeast is there of course, giving some yellow fruit notes and that little late peppery tingle I always associate with Westmalle beers.

A perfect thirst-quencher, but with enough flavour to keep things interesting. You can imagine the monks sitting in their monastery courtyard enjoying an afternoon or quiet contemplation over a few of these.

I guess this is Belgium's equivalent of a session IPA!

**Style: Belgian Pale Ale**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Abdij Der Trappisten van Westmalle**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.8% (1.25 Std Drinks)**



## De La Senne Saison Van De Bruwer

Here we have a beer from Brasserie De La Senne that looks to recreate a traditional Belgian ale from the past.

This is a spelt saison, dry hopped and refermented in the bottle with a Brettanomyces yeast. It is rustic, unfiltered and unpasteurised, and represents what a saison would have been like around the 1920's.

First thing of note for me is the Brett. I love that smell of funk, fruit, leather and wood. It is just a little fruity, with hints of peach and pineapple.

To taste it is crisp and light, with the carbonation bubbles dancing across your tastebuds. The malt body is grainy, with the spelt giving a certain nutty earthiness to the body. More of those Brett characteristcs with the early fruit just enough to invite you in. Then the yeasty funk takes hold and combines with the hops to really dry things out with a real bitterness.

Every few sips the flavour would seem to change a little; a few times I tasted a little woody smoke note, but it would then disappear for a bit.

Its an interesting beer, and I love it when breweries re-create old styles to give us a glimpse (or at least their interpretation) of what beers used to be.

**Style: Saison**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**brewer: Brasserie De La Senne**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.3% (1.38 Std Drinks)**



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## Maltgarden Blended Thoughts

Maltgarden is our new Polish brewery to join our wholesale portfolio, and we are pretty excited about having their beers here in Oz.

They started things in 2019 and were voted Ratebeer's 4<sup>th</sup> Best New Brewery in the World that year!

We just received our first shipment and it's hard to choose which beer to introduce them with – I haven't even had time to taste them all yet. But I did enjoy this beer over the weekend, so lets kick off with Blended Thoughts.

It's a double dry-hopped Hazy IPA. For me its not a NEIPA as it has a nice bitterness at the end that actually lingers. But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

The beer pours a cloudy yellow and throws off a nice juicy aroma of pineapple and mango. The soft juicy fruit follows through in the flavour. Definitely pineapple and mango but also grapefruit or really ripe mandarin. Either way it is a very pleasant, smooth and reasonably full flavour and just enough hop bitterness to hold that sweetness in check.

It finishes with a welcome bitterness that has a slightly grassy, slightly prickly nature. A very nice beer to kick things off, so watch out for more Maltgarden.



**Style: IPA**  
**Country: Poland**  
**Brewer: Maltgarden**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0% (2.37 Std Drinks)**

## Uiltje My Life Span #5

For those who were members back in October 2020, you might recall we featured the second iteration of the Uiltje 'My Life Span' series. We missed a couple but I'm happy to say here is 'number 5'.

It is a NEIPA of 7.5%, and showcases two experimental hops. The first is HBC 472, a hop which is said to offer cream, vanilla and wood flavours, with a little citrus. The other is HBC 520, which again has vanilla and citra notes.

That is pretty much what I get in the beer. The vanilla gives an early sweetness, supplemented by a fruit salad aroma. The citrus seems more there in the flavour than the aroma. The beer is finished with London Fog yeast, which is viewed as the go-to NEIPA's.

There is a lovely soft sweetness to this beer, and it masks and trace of alcohol so well. There is just a little warmth right on the aftertaste to give any hint that this is a reasonably strong beer.

Another well-done NEIPA from out Dutch hop-masters.

**Style: NEIPA**  
**Country: Netherlands**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5% (1.95 Std Drinks)**



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## La Calavera Darker Than Blue

A beer from the second of our new wholesale portfolio partners – La Calavera from the Catalunan region of north-eastern Spain. It's a lovely area to visit, and we now have an extra excuse to go there (when we can travel again that is!)

They've been quietly doing their thing since 2011, when two friends turned their homebrewing passions into a business reality. And over that time their experimental nature has fortunately led them into the realm of sour and barrel aged beers, with a strong tendency toward using Brettanomyces.

And while it is these barrel aged, 'Bretty' beers that grabbed my attention, we'll start with something a little more mainstream – but still a little left of centre.

In making this imperial pastry stout the team have added vanilla, toffee and dry dates. When pouring it is thick and the dark aroma immediately hits home. It smells sweeter than it actually tastes.

Vanilla, chocolate and the toffee present early, but there is also a fruity sweetness of dark dried fruits. It does thin out, and there comes the really interesting and unusual flavour of the dates. It finishes without being too sweet and all the flavours are nicely in balance.

**Style: Imperial Stout**

**Country: Spain**

**Brewer: La Calavera Co-Op**

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



## Alvinne Melchior

I know these distinctive Alvinne bottles can cause a ripple of panic in the non-sour beer fans amongst you, but there is no need for concern with this beer. Alvinne beers are always interesting, different, definitely made with passion, and often very difficult to put in a style box. And that was the case here.

Melchior is a beer that featured in Alvinne's portfolio in years gone by, but with their growing fondness for all things sour, this beer disappeared some years ago.

But back by popular request, it is now part of what Alvinne refer to as their 'Vintage Recipe Series'. I will follow with interest what other gems are given cameos in the future.

The label notes this beer as an Amber Winter Ale, and that is probably accurate enough. It pours a deep amber and looks reasonably still. The aroma suggests it's a bit of a malt bomb, with caramel, brown sugar, dark fruits and alcohol.

When you taste it though the beer isn't as you might have expected. There is caramel and dark fruits, an early inviting sweetness that gives way to a spicy bitterness. And it is quite highly carbonated which lifts the flavours and has them dancing across your tongue.

For a big beer, it finishes quite dry with a definite spicy aftertaste. That high ABV is covered off really well, and not even the slightest hint of anything sour!

**Style: Winter Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Alvinne**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 11.0% (2.86 Std. Drinks)**



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