

## Kees Spring Blossom

Hooray!! It's spring time, so let's kick this month off by celebrating the start of Spring with this pale ale from Kees called Spring Blossom!

A pleasant floral aroma greets you on the pour, with hints of citrus coming in behind. A slightly cloudy straw-yellow body with a nice white foam that lasts for a little while.

The flavour is all citrus and light fruits, with that floral character carrying through as well. The beer is light on the tongue, with fine little bubbles but really quite a soft carbonation.

With an easy bitterness that carries through into the finish, this beer is really a very easy drinker.

It's a beer for a warm afternoon, sitting in the sun and enjoying the emerging leaves and flowers of early spring. As Kees says on the label, 'a breeze of hoppiness in every can'.

**Style: Pale Ale**  
**Country: Netherlands**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij Kees**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.0% (1.56 Std Drinks)**



## Uiltje Fancy Pants

This is a beer from Uiltje that was originally a one-off creation but found enough love to become part of their core range.

It's a Brut IPA that uses pilsner malt and rice, with the hops of choice being Hallertau Blanc, Ekuanot and Cascade.

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.

Brut IPA's became a 'thing' around three years ago, and have already pretty much disappeared as a style. In the short time, lots of breweries made some really ordinary attempts at the style which I think led a lot of people to come to the conclusion that they didn't like the style.

It has a really crisp, light body with a moderate sweetness of tropical fruits. There is a certain sharpness to the fruity flavours – think grapefruit and white grapes – that helps create that dryness as intended for the style.

This is a decent example, as you'd expect from the Netherlands IPA masters. Another really easy drinking beer with enough to keep things interesting from start to finish.

**Style: IPA**  
**Country: Netherlands**  
**brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)**



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## Maltgarden Pool Party Fantasy

Time to show you a different side to our new Polish brewer, Maltgarden. One of the things that really attracted me to Maltgarden's beers was their interesting use of ingredients. Lots of flavour combinations that you may not expect as being complimentary, or really not that commonly used in beers.

I reckon this is my favourite of the three sours we have. It's a blond pastry sour with white guava, passionfruit, lime and coconut.

The first thing you'll notice is the thick body on the pour. With a grain bill of barley, wheat, oats, flaked oats and flaked wheat. Lactose aids the sticky pastry feel to this beer, and there is lots of fresh tropical fruits flavours with the coconut in behind.

As I was drinking this in the yard, I kept thinking of a pina colada. Sweet tropical fruits invite you in before the sour and tart present in equal measure. Pastry sours can be a little overwhelming in the sweetness, but this one balances the sweet and sour/tart really well.

The body retains a certain weight, but the beer is light and fresh. Just a perfect summer drink, heavy on the island holiday vibes.

**Style: Fruited Sour**  
**Country: Poland**  
**Brewer: Maltgarden**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.5% (2.17 Std Drinks)**



## Duvel 666

Most Belgian beer fans will be familiar with the classic Duvel beer. Originally brewed to celebrate the end of WWI, it was released with the name 'Victory Ale' but was described as 'a real devil of a beer' and the new name stuck.

This new beer from Duvel-Moortgat is released to celebrate 150 years of the brewery, and really looks to play on the devil links with the ABV set at 6.66%. (The brewery insists that while a small variance is allowed, each batch is tested to ensure it is at 6.66%!)

So, what is this new devil? It's a Belgian Blond that uses the same malt varieties as the original Duvel as well as the Duvel yeast. The bigger difference is in the hops, with 4 additional hops – plus dry-hopping – added to the traditional Styrian Goldings and Saaz hops of the original.

The result is a slightly hazy blonde beer with high carbonation and a yeasty aroma of banana and citrus. There is a citrus and fruit sweetness up front, giving in to more bitterness as the beer progresses. There is a nice citrus and spice lingering bitterness.

The brewery says this beer is aimed at the younger market who are apparently more intimidated by the higher ABV beers. I guess this is Duvel's equivalent of a session beer then!

**Style: Belgian Blond**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij Duvel-Moortgat**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.66% (1.73 Std Drinks)**



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## DOK Black To The Future

DOK Brewing Company are one of the new wave of Belgian breweries. They commenced operations in mid-2018, and invite patrons to visit their microbrewery and 30-tap beer hall located in the northern suburbs of Ghent. Just a bigger version of Brugse, Ghent was always my favourite beer-city in Belgium, so now there's just one more reason to stop there (when we are allowed to travel again).

As a brewery they are quite atypical for Belgium. They are very adventurous in the styles of beer they brew, seemingly taking on virtually any style. But most of the beers I see are more international, rather than anything you could describe as traditionally Belgian.

This beer is a great example – I can't think of more than 6 or 7 Belgian-brewed Black IPA's.

This is an interesting version of a style that probably had its heyday 7 or 8 years ago. It pours more a darkish brown than black, but there are lots of roasted malt notes that combine with the tropical fruit and coconut notes from the dry-hopping with Sabro and Columbus hops.

Dark chocolate, roasted malt, coffee, and a sustained bitterness (from the Magnum bittering hop) dominate the tropical fruits flavours that we might expect from the dry hop. Coconut is there in behind, along with a little citrus, pineapple and an earthiness that aids that firm bitterness for a dry and bitter finish.

**Style: Black IPA**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: DOK Brewing Company**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.5% (2.47 Std Drinks)**



## Clash of the Titans Reserva 2020

This is a beer that was originally a collaboration between Belgian rockstar brewers De Struise and the Hoppy People brewery from Switzerland. A batch of the beer was brewed in each brewery, and then left at that brewery to mature for 12 months in the respective barrels, the point of interest being how altitude affected the barrel aging impact on the beer.

We now have the 2020 version that was brewed at Struise and aged 12 months in Bordeaux French Oak barrels that previously held Swiss red wine.

It is a barley wine (or some call this a blond quadrupel), weighing in at a very serious 12% ABV. Definitely a beer to sip and savour this one!

A bit of a malt bomb at the start, sweet caramel, brown sugar, dried plums and raisins, quickly balanced out by some hop bitterness and character from the red wine barrel that breaks through that malt sweetness.

Time is always a friend to these beers, and we've had this for nearly a year now which has helped tame the alcohol warmth as well. You can't exactly call a 12% monster smooth, but it is probably fair to say this now drinks easier than it should for a beer of that strength.

Allow it to warm and you will really get to experience all those fruity, malty flavours, then sit back and enjoy the warming lingering finish.

**Style: Barley Wine**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Alvinne**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 12.0% (3.12 Std. Drinks)**

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