

Maltgarden Museum of Classic Beers (Hallertauer Pils)

One thing that I already love about Maltgarden is the variety of beer styles they are brewing. And brewing them all really well.

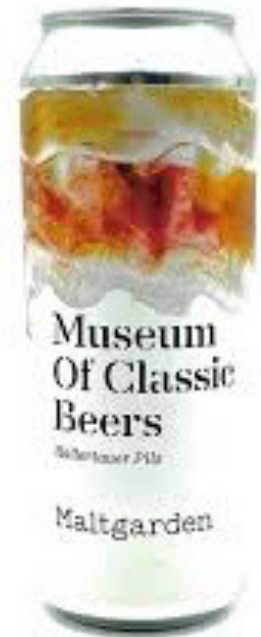
A pilsner isn't the most lauded of beers, you don't see too many social media posts showing off their pilsner 'haul'! But a good pilsner is a beer to treasure, the drinkability being supreme.

Maltgarden's offering is styled on a classic German pils, and I reckon it pretty much hits all the right notes.

Pouring a cloudy straw colour, this beer is unfiltered. Malt sweetness is present in the aroma, with a spicy, floral note and even a bit of light citrus. These characteristics all follow through in the flavour as well.

Up front there is some caramel malt sweetness. Hopped with two types of Hallertauer – Hersbrucker and Traditional – this beer is hop forward with a good level of bitterness. Quite a high carbonation helps the flavours dance around the inside of your mouth.

As the beer finishes, there is the that peppery spice and a citrus zing. It finishes crisp and dry, with the spicy hop bitterness lingering nicely.



Style: Pilsner
Country: Poland
Brewer: Maltgarden
Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.0% (1.97 Std Drinks)



Troubadour Magma Indian Summer

There have been many iterations of the original Troubadour Magma beer and (I think!) this is the latest. This beer is not too far away from the previous year's Troubadour Magma Tropical edition in my opinion, right down to the ABV being the same.

It has a subdued tropical fruit aroma that's not smacking you in the face but if you get your nose right in the glass it is there.

There is a very early sweetness of citrus fruits, particularly grapefruit and mandarin. That quickly gives way to a clean and slightly spicy herbal bitterness. There is a crisp grainy malt body that doesn't really add much to the sweetness but keeps the beer very light and dry. And there is very little of the Belgian yeast character; I might have to call this just an IPA.

It finishes dry and pleasantly bitter, and this is really what they were aiming for with this beer. A sessionable (at least in Belgian terms) beer that is intended to be enjoyed late into the autumn.

We'll just have to shut our eyes and imagine we are holidaying in Belgium, enjoying the afternoon sun shining down on the outdoor canal-side courtyard of our favourite Belgian beer bar. Take me there now!

Style: Belgian IPA
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij de Musketiers
Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (1.69 Std Drinks)

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La Calavera Alice The Dog

Another beer from our new Spanish brewery, La Calavera. Not really what they are known for – they are much more about the barrel aged, fruited and Brettanomyces beers, but I'm happy to have this IPA in the beer packs.

I enjoyed having a properly bitter beer, it makes a nice change from all the oat cream, lactose, low (no) bitterness hazies that seem to dominate lately. There's nothing wrong with that style of beer in its own right, I've just been missing the old style West Coast IPA bitterness.

And this beer has it. Styled as an American IPA, it pretty much delivers on the promise.

The aroma is actually quite subdued, with some sweet malt and very general fruity notes. If pressed I'd probably best describe it as lemon rind. The flavour is of bready malt with some stone fruits. Not really lemon to be fair, maybe a hint of tart grapefruit and dried apricots.

The bitterness grips the side of your tongue, filling your cheeks as the beer disappears. But that lovely bitterness lingers long in the aftertaste, with just a little warming alcohol feel to finish.



Style: IPA
Country: Spain
Brewer: La Calavera Co-Op
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.6% (1.98 Std Drinks)

Malheur 8

Brouwerij Malheur (previously known as Brouwerij De Landtsheer) is one of the most criminally under-rated breweries in Belgium. They are probably best known for having the 'other' champagne beers – Deus by Bosteels being the style leader. And all the more ironic given the breweries are only 5kms apart.

While not exactly obscure, you don't find the Malheur beers often in the average beer cafes in Belgium, but when you do find them they never disappoint.

This beer is a Strong Golden Ale, a style that is something of a catch-all for beers that don't fit the style of Belgian Blond or Tripel, with the best known being Duvel.

There is a lovely balance to this beer, with the bready malt and fruit sweetness being offset by a firm hop bitterness. The taste of citrus, pear and then banana from the Belgian yeast merge with a floral, spicy yeast character. The beer is drier than a blond or tripel, with fine carbonation that lifts the mouthfeel. It finishes with a lingering spicy bitterness and just a touch of alcohol warmth to remind you to slow down and enjoy this beer.

Style: Belgian Strong Golden Ale
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Malheur
Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



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Uiltje Grandsons Vol 1

We all know Uiltje are the Dutch hop masters, but they also brew other styles of beer; like this imperial milk stout.

They combine six different barley malts with flaked oats, as well as Magnum and Cascade hops. And just for good measure, they've also thrown in lactose, cinnamon and vanilla. The result is this thick black beer that gives off lots of chocolate with roasted malts, coffee and vanilla.

These all follow through in the flavour. The chocolate and lactose dominate, so this really is in dessert beer territory. Vanilla adds some depth to that sweetness, with the beer sitting heavy on the palate. The spicing is quite subdued, you kind of know there is some spicy element without being beaten down by one particular spice.

Those hops, together with a little roasted malt bite, do make an effort to dry things out a bit toward the finish, but this really is a beer for the sweet-tooth, pastry stout lovers out there.

As for the cartoon narrative, I have no idea where this comes from or where its going!

Style: Imperial Stout
Country: Netherlands
Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



Gulden Draak Smoked



Gulden Draak is one of the heritage Belgian beer labels, having been first presented to the market in 1986 (though the history of Brouwerij Van Steenberge dates back to 1874). They were one of the first Belgian beers we could buy in Australia, and the classic white label of the 'Golden Dragon' is still an iconic beer today.

But as the beer drinking public demands a constantly evolving range of beer, we see more of the old breweries making new beers. This is the newest beer to the Van Steenberge portfolio.

If you haven't had the Gulden Draak, it is best described as a dark tripel. Van Steenberg have taken this classic and added smoked malts. It sounds like a fairly simple change, but a potentially divisive move given people seem to either love or hate smoked beers.

The base beer is still there, with flavours of sweet malt and dark stone fruits. And to this we have the added smoky notes, it comes in the form of smoked ham or maple smoked bacon. Nothing too intense or acrid, it really is a sweet smoky character that adds a really interesting dimension to this beer.

So which side of the fence do you sit on here? Fan of smoked beers or not? And if you know the classic Gulden Draak, are you happy with this variation or do you still prefer the original?

I'd best have another to confirm my opinion!

Style: Smoked Beer
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Van Steenberge
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.5% (2.73 Std. Drinks)

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