

## La Calavera Kerosene

La Calavera made their name on funky, Bretty, barrel aged beers. But it stands to reason that they would need a couple of more traditional, less-confronting beers in their portfolio. After all, you'd need at least one warm up beer before tackling something like their rum barrel-aged dark sour!

So that is what we have here – a pretty traditional Belgian saison.

As you might expect, the beer pours a golden straw colour, slightly hazy and with a good, rocky foam. The aroma is a gentle mix of cereal, floral hops and of course a little of the saison farmhouse funk.

To taste, the beer is crisp and light with good carbonation. Citrus and a grassy note present early and there is an earthy bitterness that lies in behind. The finish is dry with a lingering spicy bitterness.

It is pretty much exactly what you'd want for this style of beer. Light and easy drinking, with more than enough flavour to keep things interesting, and ultimately thirst quenching.

The perfect beer for warm summer afternoons. Luckily for us we can enjoy it without need to harvest a row of crops first!



**Style: Saison**

**Country: Spain**

**Brewer: La Calavera Brewing Co-Op**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.3% (1.38 Std Drinks)**

## Kees Pink Grapefruit IPA

Brewery Kees from the historic town of Middelburg in The Netherlands is without doubt our most creative brewer. In the six years his brewery has been open he's produced more than 250 unique beers. And we aren't just talking slight tweaks to hop additions – he brews the full range of beer styles; and brews them all really well.

This beer is the Pink Grapefruit IPA and I reckon I remember this beer being part of his original core range. I can only think of 3 other beers (Caramel Fudge Stout, Barley Wine and 1750 Export Porter) that have survived the cull, so this must be something of a favourite for Kees.

The beer has a pleasant tropical and citrus aroma which follows through in the flavour. A gentle sweetness first greets the palate as a mix of sweet malt and tropical fruits that are richer and softer than you might expect of the grapefruit. But it is there, maybe a little subdued but there is a definite growing citrus bite as the beer progresses.

The body is a little heavier than you might expect for the IPA, with a softer carbonation adding to the perceived weight. The finish lifts things a little with a gentle but sustained tart bitterness.

**Style: IPA**

**Country: Netherlands**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Kees**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.5% (1.43 Std Drinks)**



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### De Kazematten Grotten Sante

I first encountered this beer nearly 20 years ago when it was produced by the St Bernardus Brewery. It was a really interesting beer for a few reasons, the first of which was that it didn't really strike me as very Belgian (except for the yeast). It's very hard to classify as it is quite a unique beer.

The name translates as 'cave beer', apt given the beer spends two months 'lagering' in the cold temperatures (constant 11 degrees) of the marlstone caves of Velkenburg and Kanne which are actually in The Netherlands in the southern strip that runs between Belgium's eastern border and Germany.

The beer was the creation of the late Pierre Celis (famous for re-establishing the Belgian Witbier style with Hoegaarden), who wanted to see the effect constant cold temperatures had on a beer. He sold the rights to the beer in 2002 to St Bernardus, who produced it until 2014.

Now the beer is produced by Brewery De Kazematten from Ypres in West Flanders. They still use the same recipe and age the beer in the same caves.

It's a brown ale brewed with spices. Lots of Belgian yeast aroma with darker malts and that spicing. It is very dry with good carbonation that lifts the beer on the palate, and finishes with a lovely spicy, tingly bitterness.



**Style: Brown Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij De Kazematten**

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



### Strubbe Ichtegem's Grand Cru

Brouwerij Strubbe is a small brewery in the town of Ichtegem, just south-west of Bruges in West Flanders. It is now owned and operated by the seventh generation of the Strubbe family.

Despite the relatively central location, Strubbe beers aren't commonly seen on café and restaurant menus, though if there is one it is almost sure to be this beer. As we've said before, the term 'Grand Cru' is usually assigned to a brewery's best beer. In this case, the label proclaims this is the best beer of Ichtegem. And that claim is probably correct!

Time for the sour beer warning for all our sour-shy members. The Flanders Red Ale is a mixed fermentation beer that starts off like a normal brown beer which is then transferred to wooden barrels; in this case for 24 months. It is in the barrels that the beer picks up the sour flavour.

At first there is a welcome sweetness from the malts that presents more like dark fruits. But it doesn't take long for the balsamic vinegar acidity to grip the sides of your tongue. There is that lovely balance of sweet and sour that vie for supremacy, but the acidity wins out in the long aftertaste.

**Style: Flanders Red Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Strubbe**

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

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## Vleesmeester Hooghied

Brouwerij Vleesmeester is a new brewery to our packs, and we'll start with their first commercial beer. Hooghied translates as 'Highness' which is actually a reference to an Antwerp metal band. But that's another story.

As they so often are, the story of this new brewery begins with three mates who decided to start making beer. Of course the process began in one of their kitchens, which gave rise to the brewery name. Sharing their homemade creations with their friends, the taste testers weren't entirely sure of the beers provenance, and thought the time spent in the kitchen had more to do with the meaty snacks. So they were jokingly called the 'meat masters', with the name just sticking.

One thing the friends had in common was their affinity for hops, preferring a higher level of hop bitterness in their beers. And this trait has also remained, with the brewery known for making hoppier-than-normal versions of beer styles.

Our 'Highness' is a strong golden ale (think Duvel as a style leader), and has a relatively sweet malt body up front, with notes of tropical fruits like peach and lychee. But that bitterness is present as well, that gives the beer a lift on the tongue and provides a long earthy and slightly spicy bitter aftertaste.

**Style: Belgian Strong Golden Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Vleesmeester**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.0% (2.34 Std Drinks)**



## Uiltje Mind Your Step

Uiltje once again proving they can make more than just hoppy beers, the name of this beer should give you early warning it isn't to be taken lightly.

Mind Your Step is a massive Imperial Stout as is a recurring name in the Uiltje line up but comes in various iterations. Such big beers lend themselves well to featuring different additions. This particular batch is the Vanilla Marshmallow Edition, so know surprises to guess the adjuncts in this can.

It is black, rich and thick giving off loads of classic imperial stout vibes with roasted malts, dark chocolate, coffee, licorice and raisins. Then there is the sweet layer with loads of vanilla and an extra sweetness I've convinced myself is the marshmallows (though whether I'd call this without the ingredient list I'm not sure).

The beer is a dessert style imperial stout which almost always means there is lactose added. A beer that is one for the the sweet tooth's, the mouthfeel is heavy, thick and lush and while no doubt a strong beer, it disguises the ABV quite well. At least until you've finished the glass!

It goes without saying that this beer is a sipper, so enjoy the flavours opening up as the beer warms. Using the rough guide of drinking at a temperature roughly equivalent to the ABV of a beer means you're in no hurry to polish this one off!

**Style: (Massive) Imperial Stout**

**Country: Netherlands**

**Brewer: Brouwerij het Uiltje**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 14.5% (3.78 Std. Drinks)**



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