

Mule Kölsch Style

Brasserie de la Mule is a new Belgian brewery that commenced operations in April 2021. Located in the Schaerbeek region of Brussels, they brew predominantly German style beers. The first of those beers is the Mule Kölsch.

Kölsch as a style originated in the German city of Cologne, and the term was first used officially in 1918 though the history is much longer than that. In the 17th Century, bottom-fermented beers were being made in Cologne, and began threatening the popularity of the top-fermented beers made by the established brewers. To appease them, the town council basically outlawed the making of bottom-fermented beers.

Roll forward a few decades, and brewers had developed a process whereby they fermented the beer with a bottom-fermenting yeast but finished by aging in the cold cellars just as the bottom-fermented beers were. This hybridized style gave rise to the beer style we now know as Kölsch (a word that is protected since 1997 for breweries within 50kms of Cologne).

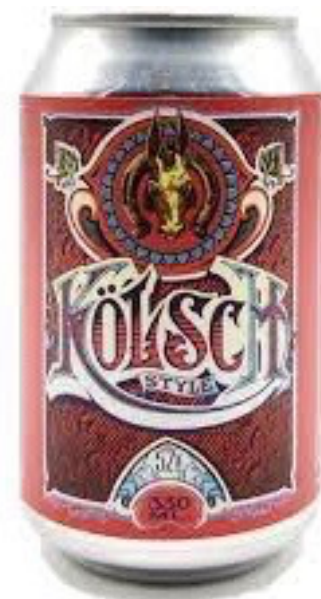
What's the Mule Kölsch-style (note the protection) like then? Pretty true to form it appears a pale straw colour and very clear. The aroma is grassy and floral. The taste is crisp and dry, with an herbal minerality. Just the slightest sweetness from the malt and a reasonably dry, bitter finish. Enjoyable in its simplicity.

Style: Kölsch

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie De La Mule

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.0% (1.30 Std Drinks)



La Debauche French IPA

I've mentioned before how much I enjoy the artwork on the La Debauche cans, and this is no different. The design is by Paul Neberra, an artist from Lisbon in Portugal who's style is described as 'pop surrealist'.

There is something decidedly French about the quirkiness of this image (and I don't just mean the baguette!) It's a detailed, mixed-up and kind of weird, and it suits this beer. Simply labelled as French IPA, this beer features all ingredients from France.

The result is an old-school IPA, from a time before an American West Coast style became an old-school IPA. Not much of the tropical fruits characteristics in the aroma or the taste with this one, more akin to a traditional English IPA.

Grassy and floral hop notes invite you in to taste a beer that has a little early sweetness from the grain. But it doesn't last long, with the earthy flavour of the hops joining the light grainy malt. There is a sustained bitterness that last from mid-palate right through to the finish. Dry and a little peppery in the aftertaste.

This isn't most people's idea of an IPA now days but I find it a nice variation from the IPA's that dominate our market. And if you like the can art, the best news of all is that I have a few shirts from La Debauche with this image. Drop me an email if you fancy purchasing a shirt, though know that the sizing options would best suit a more svelte physique!

Style: Milkshake IPA

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.7% (1.48 Std Drinks)



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Petrus Rood Bruin

For this beer we have to issue our obligatory sour beer alert!

The Petrus beers are not hard to find in Belgium, so anyone who has travelled in that part of the world may be familiar with this beer. It used to be called Petrus Oud Bruin, but as part of the rebrand a few years back it was renamed.

It is a traditional Flanders red type ale, colloquially known as a 'sweet and sour'. That nickname comes from the early malt sweetness you get on the front of the tongue, giving way to a balsamic vinegar acidity that grips the back of the tongue and works its way around your gums.

This particular beer is a blend of 1/3 Petrus Aged Pale (a fantastic beer we've previously included in the beer club, a blond beer that is aged 2 years in oak foeders) and 2/3 young brown beer (that is the base beer for an Oud Bruin that is aged in the oak barrels just for a few months.)

The blended beer then ages in barrels for 18 months, and presents as this deliciously refreshing beer. As the brewery suggests, this is a perfect aperitif or equally delicious with dessert. If you get the chance, try this beer with some cheese, they really are a great match.



Style: Flanders Red Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij De Brabandere

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

La Debauche India Stout Black Ale

Fans of La Debauche may have noticed that a lot more of their beers are now packaged in cans, and the Black Ale India Stout is one of them.

It's a little hard to categorise this beer really. It is a dark ale, with more aggressive hopping than your normal stout. Interestingly, even the brewery stop short of calling this a black IPA, so it probably does fall somewhere in between a hoppy stout and a black IPA.

Whatever your opinion on style, I think it is a beer most people will enjoy.

The aroma is inviting, with dark chocolate, coffee, dark stone fruits and some hop character. I remember this beer seeming more fruity in the hop character when I had it a couple of years back, and to me the malty side of the beer clearly dominates the aroma as well as the flavour.

Lots of dark malts for that lovely roasty flavour, dark chocolate, coffee, licorice and some spice. Then there is the hop character, which hints at citrus probably mostly in the form of grapefruit.

I like beers that can marry several different attributes without bludgeoning you with one. I think this beer does that well, though I can't help but want a little more fruity hop character. But maybe that's my failing memory!

Style: Black IPA

Country: France

Brewer: Brasserie La Debauche

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (2.08 Std Drinks)



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Wilderen Kanunnik Tripel

Last month we included the Wilderen Goud Belgian Blond Ale, and this month we have the big brother in the Kanunnik Tripel.

As is common for Belgian breweries, the tripel was the first beer off the production line when Wilderen commenced commercial activities. I've mentioned before that tripels are the Belgian equivalent of Australian pale ales. They are the yardstick by which a new brewery is measured.

And while it is a traditional style beer, it has a few points of difference. Four different malts – barley, oats, wheat and rye - are used, along with three spices and of course a little Belgian candi sugar (as is common for most tripels).

The result is a rather malty, fruity and slightly spicy Belgian Tripel.

I reckon you could name quite a few fruits that you get from this beer, like banana, peach, pear and apricot. Maybe even a little sharpness of green apple. There is a solid malty backbone, even though I don't get much hint of the creamy oats, and there is a nice prickly, bitter spicy finish.



Style: Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Wilderen Brewery & Distillery

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.2% (2.14 Std Drinks)

Atrium Onyx Amburana



Onyx is the Imperial Stout that forms part of Atrium's core range of beers. It is brewed with cacao, vanilla and orange peel. In its own right, that is an uncommon style for Belgian brewers. And this beer takes things even further.

We've mentioned before that Paula is Brazilian, and takes any opportunity to impart a little Brazilian influence on the Atrium beers. This beer has been aged in Brazilian Amburana wood barrels.

Amburana is a specific type of oak tree, commonly called Brazilian Oak. It is mostly used for aging spirits, in particular Cachaca rum. But with brewers looking for any point of difference, we are now seeing beers aged in Amburana wood barrels. The US brewers have been doing this more than any other.

The beer is dark and roasty imperial stout. Lots of dark chocolate notes, vanilla, nutty with a hint of citrus more in the taste than the aroma. The Amburana wood is known for adding a spicy, nutty, vanilla and cinnamon character, with it all tied together by a pervading woodiness.

This is a really good beer, that marries the many different tastes and aroma together in a beer that is very balanced. Finishing with a nice spicy dark chocolate bitterness, it is something of a dessert beer without being too sweet. Let's call it the perfect grown up dessert beer.

Style: Imperial Stout

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie Atrium

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

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