

Maltgarden Just A Beer

Truth be told, I am running a little campaign of sorts to prove that lager doesn't have to be boring. And my mates at Maltgarden are helping push this agenda with this Helles Style Lager. Which is 'Just A Beer!'

As many good lagers do, this style originated in Germany and is a staple for most traditional German breweries. The word 'helles' is the German word for 'bright' (or it can mean 'pale'), referencing the colour of the beer. And this is a beautiful golden colour.

The main difference between a helles lager and a pils is that the helles is a bit fuller bodied, with a more noticeable malt profile and a little less hop bitterness. And I think MG have done a good job of presenting this profile.

There is a bready malt sweetness, though it is balanced well by the earthy and spicy hop character. No surprise that they've used German Hallertauer Mittelfruh and Tradition hops for that authentic touch.

It is a tasty, refreshing and very satisfying beer, typically easy drinking for those afternoons where one pint is not enough.



Style: Helles Lager

Country: Poland

Brewer: Browar Maltgarden

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.0% (1.97 Std Drinks)

Schneider Weisse Tap 07 Original Weissbier

We all know that brewers tinker with their recipes, constantly looking to make their beer the best it can be. Well that isn't always the case.

Georg I Schneider is the man responsible for starting the brewery, and was the first commoner granted the right to brew wheat beer by King Ludwig II of Bavaria. In September 1872 Georg and his son Georg II start production in the new brewery. This beer was one of the original beers offered and is still brewed to the same recipe as it was when first brewed 150 years ago.

The brewery describes this beer as being 'what Bavaria tastes like', and anyone who has sat in a Munich beer hall and enjoyed a stein of the local hefe will be taken back to that time while drinking this.

The beer pours darker than you might expect, with a white pillowy foam. Filtering through that classic head is an aroma of banana, clove and bready malt.

It is sweet in the taste, with a rich bready malt body. Balancing that is a light citrus and apricot fruit note and a good dose of peppery spice. It finishes drier than it starts with a nicely full and prickly aftertaste.

Style: Hefeweizen

Country: Germany

Brewer: Schneider Weisse Brauhaus

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.4% (2.13 Std Drinks)



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Delirium Argentum

The Delirium beers from Brouwerij Huyghe would have to be one of the most iconic of all the Belgian beers. The pink pachyderms adorning the blue label and white bottle have been a feature of any well-stocked Belgian beer fridge for many years.

In fact, the Delirium label celebrated its 25th anniversary back in 2014. To celebrate, the brewers at Huyghe decided to make a special beer – as you do when you're a world-renowned brewery.

It was something of a surprise that the beer they chose to celebrate with was a Belgian IPA. Although given the high proportion of Belgian beer that goes to the US, and therefore the influence American importers have on the breweries, maybe there were a few suggestions from abroad. I just thought it may be something a little more traditionally Belgian.

Nevertheless, Delirium's Argentum is a very solid Belgian IPA. It has something of the Delirium Tremens about the taste, with earthy Belgian hop flavours which are subtle but there. A grainy malt body with some caramel sweetness to offset the hop bitterness, and a spicy finish. Belgian IPA or not, it's a tasty beer.



Style: Belgian IPA
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij Huyghe
Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.0% (1.82 Std Drinks)

Blaugies Darbyste

Here we have another of the Blaugies beers, this time it is their farmhouse ale brewed with wheat and fermented with fig juice.

It is apparently a traditional style of beer for the Hainaut region, though I can't remember coming across another one in my travels.

The beer pours a dark orange colour, and the small white bubbles form a really thick foam atop the beer. The aroma is fairly subtle really, with a light barnyard funk, a fruity aroma of pear (and I guess) fig, grass and straw.

The taste is a little different to what you might expect. It is immediately creamy and smooth, with a noticeable fruit character. Knowing what's in this beer, you of course can taste fig juice with the dark fruit sweetness and the slightest tartness.

There is no great funk in the flavour, though there is a grassy note to the hops. The yeast is interesting in that it leaves the beer dry without making it bone dry like a typical saison.

I think it takes a good few sips of this beer before you really start to discover all the flavours it offers. Different and intriguing, I think this is a clever creation.

Style: Saison
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brasserie de Blaugies
Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.8% (1.72 Std Drinks)



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Insel-Brauerie Baltic Tripel

I've been wanting to include an Inselbrau beer in the monthly packs for a while now, so very happy to finally do so!

This German brewery is from the island of Rügen, which is Germany's largest island located in the north of the country in the Baltic Sea. They commenced operations in 2014 and do things a little differently to most German breweries.

Interestingly all of their beers are fermented in open, shallow fermentation vessels. After fermentation, they are primed with dextrose then moved to the ripening chamber where they sit for at least 10 days at a constant temperature of 25 degrees Celsius. And they wrap every one of their beers in the wet strength wrapping paper to protect the beers from UV light.

This beer is their Baltic Tripel, which is an interesting style to appraise given the number of Belgian tripels we've featured in the packs over the years. On the nose there is a mix of fruit and malt, with a little hint of spicing. To taste, there is peach and pear, and a solid malt backbone. High carbonation has the flavours dancing across your tongue, but that sweetness does persist right through to the finish. Smooth and really easy drinking for such a big beer.

Style: Tripel

Country: Germany

Brewer: Rügener Insel-Brauerie

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



Gulden Draak

We have an unwritten rule that we don't repeat beers in the beer packs but given the number of new members signing up I think it is fair to occasionally revisit some of the classics.

This beer is one of the most easily recognisable bottles in Belgium and was probably among the first Belgian beers most people got to try. I remember seeing this beer in a select couple of Newcastle bottle shops in the late 90's.

It is somewhat unique in that it is classed as a tripel but is much darker in colour than your standard Belgian tripel. Interesting the latest labelling refers to the beer as a 'dark red tripel', and that is pretty spot on really.

There is a heavy malt aroma of caramel and sweet bread, brown sugar, dark fruits and of course the Belgian yeast. These all come through in the flavour as well, with banana, prunes and raisins and a little woodiness. The body is full and sticky, coating your mouth with a lovely semi-sweet, tingly aftertaste and a pleasant alcohol warmth that lingers as the beer disappears.

If this is your first time trying this beer, you're welcome. And if not I'm sure you're happy to have this in your beer fridge again.

Style: Dark Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij van Steenberge

Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.5% (2.73 Std Drinks)



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