

## BrewDog/Fruh King Kölsch

When you think of unlikely collaboration partners, this one is probably up there!

BrewDog are the Scottish extraverts, often ruffling feathers and seemingly of the opinion that any attention is good attention. Like them or loath them, they do actually make some pretty decent beers. The Fruh brewery in Cologne seems the other end of the scale, quietly going about their business of making seriously good lagers for the past 100+ years.

But somehow these two breweries got together late last year to make a Kolsch, and as Fruh are known as the 'Kolsch Kings' the beer name seems obvious. And no prizes for guessing in which brewery this collaboration was brewed – EU law dictates that a Kolsch must be brewed in Cologne to carry that style name.

As you'd may well imagined the beer is very good. It pours a beautifully clear golden colour, with a floral and slightly fruity aroma.

In the taste there is an initial sweetness of the malt with a hint of fruitiness, then the hops come in to add the spicy bitterness. It is reasonably dry on the finish, maybe a little sweeter than Fruh's Kolsch, but superbly drinkable.



**Style: Kolsch**

**Country: Germany**

**Brewer: Colner Hofbrau Fruh**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.2% (1.35 Std Drinks)**

## Sierra Nevada Torpedo Extra IPA

I was caught a little short this month, as one of the beers we'd brought in didn't hold up so well. Lacking a hoppy beer for this month's pack I needed to source one that was already in the country. I didn't think it would be that hard, but there really weren't that many options available that fitted the criteria.

Slightly self-indulgently I've grabbed a beer from one of the US pioneer breweries. I almost opted for the Pale Ale, as this beer was something of a game-changer in its day. But this beer was a great memory for me, and I hadn't had one in some time.

Holidaying in the US around 2005, we went to a San Francisco 49'ers game, which was a great spectacle. A visit to the canteen sourced a 'monster dog', and to my surprise and delight, the bar offered up a range of Sierra Nevada beers with Torpedo being my favourite. That's how you cater a sporting event!

Even after all these years, I really enjoyed having this beer again. (And I've subsequently had a few now!) It is just a very solid West Coast IPA. The 'Hop Torpedo' that Sierra Nevada devised for dry hopping this beer also gives the name. Whole cone Magnum and Crystal hops in the boil give the punchy 65 bitterness units, while dry hopping with Crystal, Magnum and Citra give citrus, tropical and pine notes, with a solid malt body carrying it all. I'm sure more than a few of you have had this beer before, but hopefully everyone is happy to enjoy it again.



**Style: IPA**

**Country: United States of America**

**Brewer: Sierra Nevada Brewing Co**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.2% (2.02 Std Drinks)**

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## Lindemans Framboise

Lambics are the real magic of Belgian brewing. With a brewing season running from October to May, there are only so many nights of the year where the temperature is cool enough, and the winds are blowing in the right direction for the natural airborne yeast to fall into the Senne valley west of Brussels and start the spontaneous fermentation process required for these beers.

The Lindemans family have been making lambic since 1822, and one of the few lambic producers to survive through the period where lambic beers became so unpopular that most producers stopped making them.

This beer series from Lindemans (they also similarly produce a cherry, peach, strawberry, blackcurrent and apple version) is among the more well-marketed lambics, so not the most difficult to find if you are looking for these styles.

Quite low in alcohol at 2.5% ABV, raspberry juice is added to some young lambic (around one year old) and is left to mature in a wooden barrel.

One of the few times I'd recommend tasting cold, the result is an invitingly sweet, yet tart and slightly sour beer that serves as a perfect aperitif. If you haven't explored Belgian lambic beer before, something like this is a great introduction.

**Style: Framboise (Raspberry Lambic)**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Brouwerij Lindemans**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 2.5% (0.49 Std Drinks)**



## Rochefort 8

This beer is another of our revisited classics, but one I'm happy to have any time.

Brasserie de Rochefort is a working Trappist Monastery in the south-eastern Belgium province of Namur. It is probably the most reclusive of all the Belgian Trappist monasteries as it sits atop a hill, with a high brick fence circling the monastery buildings. Rochefort does not even have a designated beer café nearby, as all the others – including Westvleteren – do.

But the beers aren't hard to find, in the nearby town of Rochefort they are available at almost every café and bar. And even further afield, any respectable bar will make sure Rochefort beers are on their menu.

Until recently, Rochefort was famed for making just its three dark beers, though in 2020 they released their Tripel Extra. Rochefort 10 is the most lauded of the beers, with the 11.3% quadrupel described as the 'King of the Trappists'. But my preference is this Rochefort 8, first brewed in 1954 and the last of the trio to be released. Originally dubbed the 'speciale' it is a little less-sweet than the 10, but with such a beautiful balance of all the flavours.

Sweet at first with hints of raisins and banana and rich chocolatey malt, as the beer progresses it dries out with some roasted malt astringency coming through along with the hop bitterness and herbal, spicy yeast notes; the aftertaste is long and full.

**Style: Strong Dark Ale**  
**Country: Belgium**  
**Brewer: Brasserie de Rochefort (L'Abbaye Notre Dame de Saint-Remy)**  
**Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.2% (2.40 Std Drinks)**



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## Maisel & Friends – Marc's Chocolate Bock

It's a new year and I thought we might try something different this month. There are a lot of beers, special editions and one-offs which are often only packaged into large bottles so we don't get to include them in the beer packs. So I figured I'd try putting in a big bottle (at the expense of the sixth beer) and seeing if our members thought this was a worthwhile idea – or not!

This beer is part of a series devised by Brauerei Gebr. Maisel, based in the Bavarian city of Bayreuth in Germany. The brewery was founded in 1887, and it now being run by the fourth generation of the family. Famed for their traditional Bavarian Weissebier, a few years ago the brewers developed the idea of brewing their interpretations of international beers, inviting friends and colleagues from the brewing and food industry to collaborate. And all while adhering to the German Purity Laws of the Reinheitsgebot.

Part of the special 'Signature Series' of three different beers, this is brewer Marc's interpretation of a classic Irish Stout but brewed as a German bock. Its purpose is to highlight the ability to create flavours in various beer styles, with just the four basic ingredients of water, malt, hops and yeast.

As you open you get a big whiff of chocolate. I mean, even the boxes holding the beers smelled of chocolate as I was unpacking these!

On first taste, I get lots of coffee. I'm not a coffee drinker, so I'm quite sensitive to the coffee character, but the richness of the malt with the slight dark fruit character

softened this. But then as the beer warmed a little, it became richer and fuller. So much so that by the time I'd finished the bottle, I really didn't get much coffee.

Dark chocolate pushed through with that nice bitter edge, as well as some caramel sweetness, dark berries and hint of bitter spice on the finish. The flavours linger well

in the aftertaste, as the beer drinks bigger than the ABV, which is never a bad thing in beers like this.

I'll be trying more of the beers in this series, so be sure to let me know your thoughts on Including the odd large format beer in our packs.

**Style: Doppelbock**

**Country: Germany**

**Brewer: Brauerei Gebr. Maisel**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5% (4.44 Std Drinks)**



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