

Pinta Pilsner

To borrow a quote from German beer writing: “A simple Pilsner often demands more from its creators than an imaginative craft beer, the brewer cannot hide behind crazy raw materials or techniques. A classic beer is mercilessly honest and requires maximum craftsmanship.”

The pilsner is a specific style of lager being more hop-forward and fermented with a pilsner yeast. Compared to a lager, the pilsner is hoppier and a little more spicy and bitter. Quite simply, brewed well a pilsner is a thing of great beauty.

Pinta present their take on this traditional beer style. It pours with a quite clear golden body and billowing white foam. Through the head you can get aromas of grainy malt and grassy hops.

There is a little early sweetness from the malt, giving in to the grass, hay and slightly citrus hops that create a beautiful balance in flavour. The beer dries out along the way, leaving a very pleasant spicy bitterness that lingers long in the finish.

Style: Pilsner

Country: Poland

Brewer: Browar Pinta

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.1% (2.01 Std Drinks)



De La Senne Zinne Des Flandres

This beer is the second in the series of three beers to celebrate 20 years of their iconic Zinnebir. De La Senne brewed these beers in collaboration with breweries that played an important part in their history.

Brasserie Thiriez is a rustic brewery in the town of Esquelbecq near to the French/Belgian border. This family brewery describes itself as 'a hoppy-crazy family', focusing on hops produced in and around their region of French Flanders. So no surprise that Daniel Thiriez selected 100% French hops to be used in making this collaborative brew.

The slightly hazy, golden body carries a thick white head. Through the foam you will receive a floral, citrus aroma mixed with a grainy malt base.

There is a little fruit sweetness up front, with that grainy malt carrying in the solid hop bitterness that is so characteristic of De La Senne beers. Medium weight to the body, with the spicy yeast character sharpening the hop flavours of citrus, grassy, peach and a slightly herbal note.

Reasonably dry in the finish, the hop bitterness lingers for a light and long finish. It is such a drinkable Belgian pale ale you could easily satisfy yourself with a few of these beers over an afternoon.

Style: Belgian Blond

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie De La Senne/Brasserie Thiriez

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.8% (1.51 Std Drinks)



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Maltgarden Pool Party Ecstasy

Until we started ordering beer from Maltgarden at the start of 2021 I had no idea what a 'Fruited Pudding Sour' was, but I ordered some thinking what's the worst that can happen? Turns out they are a brilliantly different style of sour!

Keen Maltgarden fans may recognise a similarity in the naming of this beer to one we've had in the past. Pool Party Fantasy was a fruited smoothie sour with white guava, passionfruit, lime and coconut. Basically a beer version of a Pina Colada.

For this beer those same ingredients have been given the 'super smoothie' treatment. This beer is thick, our enjoyment has gone from fantasy to ecstasy!

It pours like mango nectar, and you'll probably notice some separation of the beer as it comes out of the can. A wafting aroma of tropical fruits – passionfruit, guava, peach – along with a citrus note and some coconut.

As expected this follows through in the flavour. Lots of fruit sweetness, sticky and full like nectar, soft and creamy from the lactose with more of a tartness than true sourness. It really is an interesting style, I'm not sure I'd want to of these back to back, but a beer that is very clever and most enjoyable.

Style: Fruited Pudding Sour

Country: Poland

Brewer: Browar Maltgarden

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.5% (2.17 Std Drinks)



De Dochter Van De Korenaar Finesse

De Dochter Van De Korenaar (which translates as 'The Daughter of the Ear of Corn') is a fabulous family brewery in the town of Baarle-Hertog, a Belgian enclave within The Netherlands.

This was the first DDVDK beer I tried and was the reason I planned a trip to visit the brewery many years ago. My lasting memory of this beer was that it was a delicious tripel, at once smooth and creamy but also sharp and spicy. It has been a while since I've had this beer again, so we'll see how that memory holds up.

It pours a hazy orange gold colour with a thick white foam and an inviting aroma that is a mix of malt and fruit sweetness, classic Belgian yeast notes and spicing.

The beer is smooth and sweet up front. A good breadly malt backbone carries the additional fruit flavours of peach, apricot and pear along with some hay and light spice. And that creaminess is still there, probably more early on than late.

The finish is somewhat dry and spicy, pleasantly bitter while still full and flavoursome. Not exactly the average Belgian tripel, it has a three-grain malt bill of barley, wheat and rye. Deliciously different to the norm – that is what this brewery is all about!

Style: Tripel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Haacht

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



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Enghien d'Hiver

As the days get shorter and the nights get cooler, it seems an appropriate time to introduce some winter beers into the packs.

Brasserie de Silly is a small family brewery that has been around since 1850. Named after the town of Silly, about a 45 minute drive south-west of Brussels it is currently managed by two cousins being the 6th generation of the family.

The Double Enghien label was introduced in 1975 and consists of a Blonde, Brune and this beer being the winter seasonal Christmas beer with coriander and ginger.

It pours a brownish amber with quite a thin head that collapses pretty quickly. The aroma is subdued, malty and spicy with Belgian yeast notes. It kind of hides what you are about to taste.

And there is much more to the flavour, It starts moderately sweet with a good malty backbone and hints of peach, pear and banana. The Kent Goldings and Hallertau hops add a nice earthy bitterness. But the real star of this beer is the addition of the ginger that really lifts the mouthfeel and contributes a deliciously drying zing to the back half of the beer.

Slightly different to most of the winter beers, and really something akin to a tripel at heart, this was a really nice surprise.

Style: Winterbier (or a Spiced Tripel)
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brasserie De Silly
Alcohol Content (ABV): 9.0% (2.34 Std Drinks)



St Bernardus ABT 12

This is another of our re-introduced classic beers, but one I'm sure everyone will be happy to have in their beer stash over winter.

St Bernardus produce some excellent beers, and this ABT (or to use the American term of quadrupel) is the jewel in their portfolio. It's most well known for being brewed to the same recipe as the elusive Westvleteren 12 from St Sixtus. For those that don't know, from 1946 through to 1992 St Bernardus brewed the beers of St Sixtus under license. This beer is more than just a Westvleteren clone, it is basically the same beer bar the fermentation with a different yeast.

Even without that creditworthy fact, this is an awesome beer in its own right. So much so that in a portfolio of excellent beers this beer accounts for over half of the production from the brewery!

The beer pours a dark brown colour and instantly you get big aromas of dark malts and dried dark stone fruits. The taste offers even more – black bread, roasted malts, raisins, plums, molasses, toffee, some spices and a hint of wood smoke. There is also a lovely hop bitterness that lifts the beer mid-palate. A long and complex aftertaste leaves you very satisfied but eager for more.

Did you know? Every 1000th bottle features a special label with a winking monk!

Style: Quadrupel
Country: Belgium
Brewer: Brouwerij St Bernardus
Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)



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