

## Rulles Epeautre

Brasserie de Rulles is the southern-most brewery in Belgium, located in the town of Rulles in the Gaume region where the southern part of Belgium runs beside Luxembourg. The two hour drive from Brussels takes in some of the most scenic parts of Belgium, through the beautiful hilly Ardennes region.

The drive is worth the effort when you arrive at the historic farmhouse location, which seems perfectly suited to this rustic farmhouse brewery.

For many years, the Rulles beers were only available in 750ml bottles. But late last year, they first made available some of their beers in 330ml bottles, so I've been looking forward to including some Rulles beers in our packs.

The first beer is the Epeautre, a rustic blond ale brewed with barley malt and completely organic spelt from nearby farms. Pouring a nearly clear golden colour, the first thing I noticed was how very saisony the nose was. Grainy malt, some spicing and a good dose of farmhouse funk.

It was also more saison in the taste than I'd remembered. A really light, crisp biscuity malt body carries a good level of hop bitterness. It is earthy, bitter, spicy and dry. A perfect afternoon thirst quencher, with more than enough flavour to happily reach for a second straight away. Even better than I'd remembered it.

**Style: Belgian Pale Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brasserie Artisanale de Rulles**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.6% (1.20 Std Drinks)**



## De Molen Fruit & Kruid

Even our new members will be getting used to having a De Molen beer in their monthly beer packs as we feature yet another new De Molen beer.

And this beer is interesting for a couple of reasons.

We have here a fairly traditional Belgian blond beer, though it has been hopped with Sorachi Ace. This hop can be quite divisive, with people often loving or hating the aromas and flavours it gives off. Lemon citrus, herbal, coriander are common positive characteristics. The most common negative one is cat pee!

The fact De Molen have introduced this new beer straight into their core range also hints at where they are seeing their market. Over the years De Molen were always pushing boundaries, with a penchant for the bigger, bolder styles. So including a blond (alongside other new core beers like the NEIPA and witbier) is a change in direction for the new ownership of De Molen.

As for the beer, it is actually a very nice beer. A good medium-full bready malt backbone, with citrus and spices adding the zing. A pleasant grassy herbal hop bitterness finishes things off (without any hint of cat pee for me!)

**Style: Belgian Blond**

**Country: Netherlands**

**Brewer: Brouwerij De Molen**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.2% (1.61 Std Drinks)**



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## Steenbrugge Bruin

With a history dating back to 1898, the Steenbrugge label was one that you could find almost anywhere in Belgium from supermarkets to beer cafes. In 2003 the label was sold into the Palm Breweries stable (owned by Swinkels), and they've continued to have widespread distribution around Belgian and neighbouring countries.

So here we have Steenbrugge Bruin. The style 'bruin' is a bit of a catch-all in that it can include dubbels and strong dark ales, though both those styles are a little more clearly defined. This beer is much more like a dubbel.

Brown in colour with a thick white foam, aromas of raisins, dates, caramel malt and brown sugar fill the glass. It is interesting to note that these beers often gain their colour from the caramelised beet sugars used, rather than using darker malts.

The taste is initially sweet and fruity. Again, the dark dried stone fruits are dominant, raisins and dates, with some dark bready malt and some mild spicing and a little woodiness. The sweetness carries through the beer, though there is some hop bitterness toward the back end for a short bittersweet finish.

**Style: Belgian Dubbel**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Palm (Swinkels Family Brewers)**

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



## La Chouffe

We've had La Chouffe in the beer packs before, but it was many years ago. And apart from it being a great beer, the real reason I've included it again is because it was recently packaged into cans for the first time!

We visited Brasserie Achouffe for the first time many years ago, when it was still small and owned by the founders. It was February, snowing and bitterly cold but sitting in the small tasting area next to the log fire tasting La Chouffe and McChouffe was a fantastic experience. The brewery has since been sold to the Duvel-Mortgaat group, and for a time the production was moved to the much larger Duvel brewery but reverted back to the original brewery after customer protests.

I think it is fair to include La Chouffe among the iconic beers of Belgium. Anyone who has been to Belgium will have sampled the strong golden ale at some point. And the little character Marcel is instantly recognisable.

A hazy blond colour with a nose full of Belgian yeast and coriander. There is a grainy malt sweetness up front, with hints of yellow stone fruits. A light and zesty mouthfeel, there is also citrus, white pepper and a pleasant lingering bitterness on the finish.

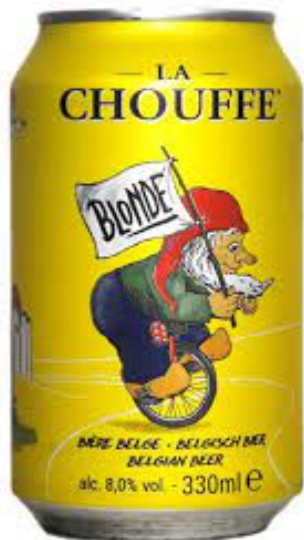
Take it to the park, the sporting field, or just enjoy at home. This is one of Belgium's classic beers. As delicious and as satisfying as the first time you tried this beer, and one that will hold its place in many Belgian beer-lovers hearts.

**Style: Belgian Strong Golden Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brasserie d'Achouffe (Duvel-Mortgaat)**

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



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## Duvel Tripel Hop Cashmere

After including the Duvel Tripel Hop Citra in last month's pack, I thought it only right to back up with the second available version this month to allow for a timely comparison of the two beers. (I'll tell you the correct answer, but not just yet!)

The Citra version has been a permanent feature in the Duvel range since 2017, and they backed that up with the Cashmere version since 2019.

For the hop geeks among you, Cashmere hops were developed as a cross between Cascade and Northern Brewer hops. It isn't exactly a new hop, but I can't say that there are too many beers I see that use this hop as the feature.

The result is a delicious Belgian IPA, in the true sense of the word. By that I mean the base beer is a proper Belgian beer (doesn't get much more 'proper Belgian' than Duvel), which is then given the IPA dry hopping treatment.

A light and grainy Belgian Golden Strong at heart, the Belgian yeast characters are dominant, with lots of fruity flavours of peach, melon, citrus and some spice. Reasonable hop bitterness lightens the mouthfeel and provides a tingly, lingering bitterness to the finish. Great beer but I still prefer the Citra version!



**Style: Belgian IPA**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Duvel-Mortgaat**

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

## Du Bocq Tete De Mort X-Mas

To finish things off for our December pack of course we have the obligatory Belgian Christmas beer. And this was a new one for me.

Brasserie De Bocq is a fairly large (for Belgian breweries) regional brewery in the town of Purnode in the province of Namur. The original brewery was started in 1858 when a farmer decided to make some beer in the winter months.

It changed hands early in the 2000's, but still remains an independent, family-owned enterprise, most known for their delicious Belgian Witbier Blanche De Namur. Other notable labels are the Gauloise and Corsendonk beers, with the Tete De Mort series coming into being much more recently.

Our Christmas beer pours a brown colour with a billowing white head that sticks around for the duration of the beer. Aromas of brown malts, caramel, dark fruits, licorice and spices are all present.

All those aromas are present in the taste. Early sweetness of those caramel malts and dark fruits make for a tempting start. But it doesn't take long for the Christmas spices to make themselves known. Licorice for sure, coriander (always a good bet with Belgians) and a little woodiness present as the beer progresses.

For a Christmas beer it is quite easy drinking, not overly complex but a nice beer that definitely brings the Christmas spirit to your glass.

**Style: Kerstbier**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brasserie Du Bocq**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.1% (2.11 Std Drinks)**

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