

## Weißenhofer Bonifatius Dunkel

This traditional Dunkel comes from what is claimed to be Germany's third oldest brewery (behind only Weihenstephan and Weltenburger), the former monastic Klosterbrauerei Weißenhofer, which has been owned by the same family since 1827.

The Dunkel is a traditional German style, and was in fact the first style of beer to be regulated by the Bavarian Beer Purity Law (Reinheitsgebot) of 1516. The name Dunkel means 'dark' and this was Bavaria's original brown lager. It was the most popular style of beer until sometime around the 1830's to 1840's, so is a very important style of beer throughout Germany's brewing history.

Most German breweries will produce a Dunkel, so they remain a firm part of the brewing industry now, though it isn't a common style for Australian brewers.

Our beer pours a lovely deep chestnut colour with a really thick white foam that slowly settles to a thin lip around the outside of the glass.

An inviting aroma of roasted malts and some dark dried fruits hints at the flavour to come. The taste is a lovely balance of just enough malt sweetness to match the roasted malt and hop bitterness. I do think balance is the key word – no one attribute really jumps out, but together it makes for a very easy drinking, flavoursome dark lager.



**Style: Dunkel**

**Country: Germany**

**Brewer: Klosterbrauerei Weißenhofer**

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

## Antwerpse Brouw Compagnie Seef

I think this is a really good beer, but it has an even better story.

Dating back to the 1700's there was a general style of beer made by the many brewers of Antwerp called Seefbier. It was a cloudy blond ale, with barley, buckwheat, oats and wheat along with all Belgian hops and a special yeast.

This was the most popular beer of the region until a combination of the Industrial Revolution and WWI saw many of Antwerp's small breweries fall into disuse and or pillaged for their equipment when the German's occupied Belgium. The beer disappeared, and along with it a part of Antwerp's history.

That was until an Antwerp local by the name of Johan Van Dyck decided to revive this beer style. His problem was that all the brewing records of the small breweries seemed to have been destroyed during the war. He spent three years researching all he could about Seefbier, then began visiting families that owned breweries before the war. He finally found a 90+ year old brewer who had kept his original recipe for the Seefbier. He now had a recipe but no historical yeast, until an old yeast strain was discovered in the Leuven University Yeast vaults. Through these efforts, this historical ale is once again brewed in the city of Antwerp.

The aroma and flavour are very yeast driven, with banana and other yellow fruits, malty and slightly spicy. The taste is a mix of grainy malts and rustic herbs and floral hops, finishing dry with a little spicy aftertaste.

**Style: Belgian Blond**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Antwerpse Brouw Compagnie**

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



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## Poperinge's Hommelbier

For me, this is one of Belgium's lesser-known classic beers. I had it on my first trip to Belgium over 20 years ago, and I still love this beer now.

The Van Eecke Brewery in Watou is located near to the French-Belgian border in West Flanders, very near to both the St Bernardus Brewery and the Westvleteren St Sixtus Trappist Monastery.

'Hommel' in the local dialect means 'Hop', and this beer is a tribute to the area once famous as a major producer of hops. Of course, it features two hops grown locally in Poperinge – Brewers Gold and Hallertau.

This beer was arguably Belgium's first IPA and has become the official beer of the tri-annual Poperinge Beer and Hop Festival.

Hommelbier is a golden bronze ale. The nose has typical Belgian yeast characters, combined with summer fruits and hints of spice.

The taste follows the aroma, initially sweet then citrus and floral hop flavours giving way to spice and peppery prickles. Orange peel, honey and cumin are common descriptors of the flavour, though none of these are actually added. The finish is dry without being overly bitter.



**Style: Belgian IPA**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij Van Eecke**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 7.5% (1.95 Std Drinks)**

## Straffe Hendrik Wild 2023



Last month we had the Straffe Hendrik Tripel, which I believe is among Belgium best lot of Tripels. Once a year, they take a batch of the tripel and referment in the bottle with a wild *Brettanomyces* yeast. And the 2023 version is the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of this special beer.

'Brett' beers are in interesting creature, the yeast has a very strong aroma and flavour effect on the beer which makes them quite divisive. Those that like Brett beers absolutely love them, but there are just as many people who don't like them. (So I apologise in advance to those people, but do try and stick it out!)

I think this is a particularly strong dose of Brett in this beer, it is quite aggressive in the aroma as well as the taste. Leather is probably the first thing that comes to mind when I start this tasting.

The backbone is the same malty tripel as last month, but the wild yeast characteristics really do throw themselves over the top of that. I also get some fruit flavours like peach and pineapple, a woodiness mixed with herbal hops and some peppery spice. It finishes quite dry for such a big beer, with a really full and lingering aftertaste.

I like Brett beers for the amazingly complex flavours and aromas you can get, and I did enjoy this beer. But I don't think I'd want the Brett to be any more dominant than it is!

**Style: Belgian Tripel**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij De Halve Maan**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 10.0% (2.60 Std Drinks)**

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## Troubadour Magma Vina 2022

I've written before about our love of the Troubadour Magma, so click on some of the other 'Magma' beers if you want to read more about this renowned beer.

Once a year, the 'Musketeers' decide to do something different to their famous Magma beer. For 2022, it was decided to finish the Magma with a wine yeast.

Now without getting too technical, there are different strains of yeast that are used to ferment the different sugars you get from barley versus those you get from grape juice. You don't normally use the 'wrong' one. But after testing lots of different wine yeasts, the guys found one that converted the sugars in the wort at the same time as producing a really fruity aroma as a by product. That is what we have in this beer.

The Magma was first brewed as a big Belgian tripel style, then hopped up with Simcoe like a West Coast IPA would be. It is the collision of two nations' brewing styles, and a lovely beer. So we have the big caramel malt body, with lots of tropical fruits notes from the hops. And then the wine yeast supporting those fruit notes with hints of apricot, mango, apple and star fruit (the last one is the suggestion of the brewer!) A really interesting version of the Magma, with lots of flavour that is really well balanced and hides the ABV very well.

**Style: Tripel (but so much more)**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij de Musketieres**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.5% (2.21 Std Drinks)**



## De Glazen Toren Canaster Winterscotch

Fortunately for our beer packs, Glazen Toren have started putting some of their beers into 330ml bottles, and this beer is the latest to join that group.

Canaster is the winter seasonal offering from Glazen Toren, and while it is labelled as a Scotch Ale, this style of beer was typical for the region of Aalst going back centuries to the time of the Carmelite Monks.

Brewed with dark barley and wheat malts, as well as dark Belgian candi sugar (the sugar crystals they get from the numerous sugar beet farms around Belgium), and hopped with the local Hallertau hops, this beer is an ode to the area.

Pouring a dark brown colour with a thick foam that quickly collapses in on itself, the aroma is full of roasted malts, caramel and dark dried fruits.

In the flavour those roasted malts take centre stage. Caramel, dark chocolate and brown sugar combine with the fruit flavours of raisins and dates. The beer is smooth though there are the sharp flavours of roasted malt the show. It finishes reasonably dry, with the pleasant spicy aftertaste.

**Style: Scotch Ale**

**Country: Belgium**

**Brewer: Brouwerij De Glazen Toren**

**Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.7% (2.27 Std Drinks)**



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