

Newcastle Brown Ale

This beer is a bit of an English icon, and I'm sure a bunch of you will have had this beer before. But indulge me a little as I hadn't sampled one of these for many years as nostalgia got the better of me and I ordered some for our packs.

It was originally brewed in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in 1927, though it is now brewed at the John Smith brewery in Tadcaster following a few sales and mergers.

Originally a blend of two distinct beers – a strong dark beer and a lower alcohol amber ale, after three years of development it became one of the UK's most distinctive English Brown Ales. Brewed with a combination of English Pale and Dark Caramel malts, it has a low bitterness and a fairly light body. Interestingly, the beer used to get much of its colour from caramel colouring but this was removed in 2015 'for health reasons'!

As alluded to above, the beer pours a dark caramel colour (now all from the roasted and caramel malts), with a reasonably soft aroma hinting at malt and a little fruit.

There is an early caramel malt sweetness with a little dried fruit note. The bitterness is low, just enough to balance the sweetness. It is quite easy drinking, but does have enough flavour to make it interesting til the end.

Style: English Brown Ale

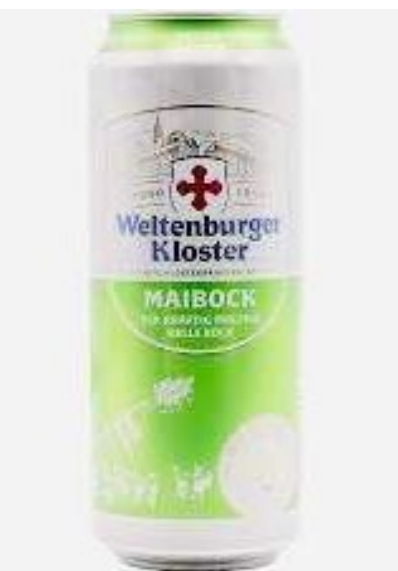
Country: England

Brewer: Scottish & Newcastle Breweries

Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.7% (1.22 Std Drinks)



Weltenburger Maibock



If you've been a beer club member for a while you'll know that we've never had a bad beer from the world's oldest Monastery brewery. So when I was offered the chance to pre-order this beer it was a certainly for our beer packs.

A Maibock – also known as a Helles Bock – is a strong pale German lager. Traditionally a seasonal beer, they are brewed at the end of winter to celebrate the arrival of Spring.

The style came into being around the mid-1800's as a variant of the standard dark, malty bocks Germany is known for. It played off the popularity of pale lagers at that time, more closely aligning the bocks to the trend of the time.

Our beer pours a very inviting dark golden colour that just looks like it will taste good!

The taste is clean and malty, more like grainy bread than sweet. It is quite a full flavour, especially for the ABV as the beer has a weight on the tongue. As is often the case with German lagers, the balance of flavours is the key. There is a lightly spicy floral taste on the finish, with a pleasant lingering malty aftertaste.

Another quality beer, just as we've come to expect. I think I'll be having more than a couple of these over the next few weeks.

Style: Maibock

Country: Germany

Brewer: Klosterbrauerei Weltenburg

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.5% (2.56 Std Drinks)

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Viven Champagner Weisse

It has been a long time since we've had a Viven beer in the packs, and I wasn't really sure what to expect from this beer when I first saw it was available, but it sounded interesting and just might be one of the most unique wheat beers you've had in a long time.

The most amazing fact about this beer is that it is a seasonal Christmas beer, offered as something a little different at the time we generally look forward to our heavy, dark, spiced Kerstbiers from Belgium.

Viven took a traditional German wheat beer base, and finished the fermentation with a specialty champagne yeast. And I thought it was really well done.

It has a pale golden straw-coloured body, with just a little cloudiness beneath a thick white foam that lasts quite a while after the pour. It has a reasonably sweet aroma, with notes of bready malt, some citrus and a little sugar.

The flavour is not as sweet as the nose suggests though there is an inviting early sweetness. Bready malt and banana are the first to present, quickly joined by some spicing with coriander and light citrus.

The finish is decidedly light, crisp and dry, with a lingering hop bite and spicy prickly that lasts.



Style: Wheat Beer

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Van Viven

Alcohol Content (ABV): 4.8% (1.25 Std Drinks)

Cherry Chouffe

From the feedback we get (which I love by the way), it seems more and more people are enjoying these Belgian fruit beers. There was a time we'd almost cross our fingers when putting one of these types of beers in the packs, but now they are among the most widely requested for extras. So here we go again!

Brouwerij van Honsebrouck is one of the larger independent breweries in Belgium. Still a family-owned business, it has origins dating back to 1811, and is now being controlled by the 5th generation of the family.

The brewery is in Ingelmunster, with the 'Kasteel' label commencing in 1989 following the family purchase of the magnificent Ingelmunster Castle. The first Kasteel beer produced was the Donker, an 11% strong dark ale. The Rouge is a blend of Donker and sweet cherry liqueur and macerated cherries.

The aroma and colour leave you in no doubt that this is a cherry beer. The flavour of the sweet cherries dominates the malt of the dark beer, though it is in the background lending hints of chocolate. There is also a gentle tartness from the cherries that offers a balance to that sweetness and induces just a little eye twinge.

It is one for the sweet-tooth, and is like drinking a sweet cherry liqueur without any alcohol presence. This beer I prefer served cooler. It is a great aperitif on a hot afternoon.

Style: Belgian Belgian Fruit Beer

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brasserie Achouffe (Brouwerij Duvel-Mortgaat)

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



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Funky Fluid Game Over: Pyramid

'Game Over' is a series of beers from Funky Fluid where they brew different styles of hoppy beers paired with video or arcade gaming themes. They release the beers in 'levels', which really means they are always different batches with distinct names and varied hop combinations. But every beer is a new release. Sound like anyone else we know?

This beer is based on what is described as 'a psychological horror' video game called Silent Hill, where the main character is 'Pyramid Head'. No?? Me neither, but apparently that is the story here!

To the beer then.....we have a double rye NEIPA, which sounded most interesting to me when I saw their brewing list. It features El Dorado, Nelson Sauvin and Riwaka hops and a smorgasbord of grains.

It pours quite a cloudy straw colour, with a body that looks thicker and heavier than it actually is. Passionfruit and some other tropical stone fruits fill the aroma. Those same fruits are present in the taste, with the addition of grapefruit citrus. There is a good level of bitterness (for a NEIPA!!), and a lovely spiciness from the rye that leaves a little prickle in the aftertaste. And its not until you finish this beer that you seem to notice the 8% ABV!



Style: Double IPA

Country: Poland

Brewer: Browar Funky Fluid

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.0% (3.16 Std Drinks)

Corsendonk Christmas Ale 2025



The Corsendonk name refers to the Priory of Corsendonk which was an important monastery over the centuries spanning 1398 to 1784, after which it was closed down thanks to the French Revolution.

It wasn't until 1968 that the abbey was rebuilt as accommodation. Later in 1982, it was decided to use the Corsendonk name to promote a range of beers. This is the process which gives rise to the term 'abbey ale'. There was no actual brewery in the Priory of Corsendonk, so the beer making was contracted out to various breweries in the area. Now, all of the Corsendonk beers are produced at the Brasserie De Bocq.

In Belgium, they refer to this as being just a beer brand, but that doesn't mean the beer isn't any good. In fact, the Corsendonk range of beers are renowned as being excellent examples of their respective styles and the Christmas Ale is one of the festive seasonal beers we bring in most years. This is the 2025 beer that we've been sitting on to include in our July packs for 'Christmas in July'.

The beer is rich and smooth, with a big dark roasty caramel malt body, brown sugar, dried fruits, Christmas cake spices like clove, cinnamon, licorice and a subtle hint of smoke. A gentle alcohol warmth to suit the season, and a lingering dry earthy finish.

Style: Kerstbier

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Corsendonk (at Brasserie Du Bocq)

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

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