

Estrella Galicia

Not to be confused with Estrella Damm (which is readily found throughout Spain and western Europe), this beer is from the family-owned Hijos de Rivera brewery in the city of A Coruna in the northwest of Spain. Founded in 1906, the brewery is currently in the hands of the fourth generation of the Rivera family.

The brewery makes a few different beers, mostly higher ABV style lagers, but this is their most recognisable product for sure.

An interesting history tells of the brewery's solution to hop shortages during WWI – grow your own hops! They were Spain's first commercial hop plantation, and to this day are the only Spanish brewery that grown its own hops to support their production.

And despite exporting their beer to 70+ countries around the world, all of that beer is brewed in the same brewery in A Coruna. That a pretty amazing feat!

To the beer then.....it pours a lovely golden colour as you'd expect for a premium lager. The aroma is clean, lightly floral, a little grassy and full of grainy malt. On to the taste, and you'll notice the solid malty backbone, more so than your average lager. The hop bitterness is also more pronounced with that floral, grassy hop character. It is a really nice lager that is a bit more of everything than your average lager. Delicious!

Style: Premium Lager

Country: Spain

Brewer: Hijos de Rivera

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.5% (1.43 Std Drinks)



Warka Strong

We've only ever had one imperial pilsner in the beer packs before, so with this beer from Browar Warka in Poland, we double our count.

For the linguists among our members, the word 'Warka' is actually a unit of measure, being the volume of malt or wort obtained from a batch of malt. But it is also the name of the oldest official beer brand in Poland.

The history dates back to 1478 when the town of Warka was granted an exclusive royal privilege to be the sole supplier of beer to the royal court. They apparently served beer directly from the basement of Warsaw town hall.

So with that history, we'd be reasonable in expecting a pretty decent beer.

Happily, I reckon we have just that. The first thing you'll notice, in both the aroma and taste, is the rich malt body. The beer uses two different malts – light pilsner and dark roasted malt – for a rich copper-coloured body.

The taste has an inviting sweetness early on. Caramel malt, toasted bread and hints of honey make it easy to enjoy. There is a little bitterness that joins in half way through, balancing out the malty sweetness well. The aftertaste remains malty and rich, with just a little earthy prickle on the finish.

Style: Imperial Pilsner

Country: Poland

Brewer: Browar Warka

Alcohol Content (ABV): 6.3% (2.49 Std Drinks)



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Bink Blond

Brewery Kerkom is one of the 'new-old' Belgian breweries that started in the 1980's. But the history of this farmhouse brewery dates back to 1878. Based in the rural town of Sint-Truiden, it was a former coaching inn and is located along one of the famous Belgian cycling tracks.

The first time I visited Kerkom the cobblestone courtyard was filled with hundreds of cyclists enjoying a beer break. The old farm buildings and stables are a picturesque setting, but require lots of upkeep. So much so that in 2022, the Kerkom brewery was sold to Brouwerij De Ranke who now make the Bink beers. Happily the old space is still run as a hospitality venue.

The Bink Blond was the first beer out of the Kerkom brewery. It is a slightly lower-ABV, more hop-forward version of a traditional Belgian blond. According to the brewer, 'this is just the way most Belgian beers used to be'.

The hop bitterness is immediately present, followed by a sweet biscuity malt and some distant hints of light yellow stone fruits. The beer finishes refreshingly dry, with a lasting slightly bitter aftertaste.

Adorning the wall of the farmhouse building housing the brewery is the proud statement 'We brew it here, We drink it here, We sell what's left!'

Style: Belgian Blond

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Kerkom (Brouwerij De Ranke)

Alcohol Content (ABV): 5.5% (1.43 Std Drinks)



Leffe Prestige 1240

This new beer from Abbaye de Leffe was first released in April 2024 to celebrate the date the Abbey first started brewing. I was able to secure some of this beer with the intention of including it in our beer packs. But we were a little over-zealous in filling wholesale orders which left us with not enough to include in the beer packs.

So while some of you may have seen this beer last year courtesy of your favourite bottle shop, I can now rectify the situation and share it with all our beer club members.

The beer has a malt bill consisting of barley, wheat and oats, with a proprietary (secret) blend of spice and herbs to compliment the Leffe yeast. It's a fancy Leffe!

Pouring a deep golden colour, the aroma screams Belgian beer. A good amount of sweet malt mixed with yellow fruits and lots of spices like clove and vanilla.

And that's pretty much what is revealed in the taste. You are greeted by a smooth, full malty sweetness early on. Pear, peach and citrus joins in with the spice mix of coriander, clove and maybe something slightly stronger like a little licorice root. It finishes drier than it starts, with a linger spicy bitterness.

It does taste a step up from the normal Leffe beers, just as it should. Nice to see a big brewery offering something a little special to their range.

Style: Belgian Strong Blond Ale

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Abbaye De Leffe

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



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Duvel Tripel Hop: Krush

With this beer, Duvel-Moortgat continue their tradition of the Duvel Tripel Hop iterations featuring different hops. You can read about the history of these beers on the Duvel Tripel Hop Citra page which was first made in 2007.

The idea is that the legendary Duvel beer is dry-hopped with a feature hop. Krush was known as HBC 586 while it was still in its experimental phase. We've had a few beers over the last couple of years with that hop.

We know Duvel is a benchmark Belgian beer, so what has the dry-hopping with Krush done to this beer?

As we'd expect the beer pours a glowing golden colour with a billowing white foam. There is loads of fresh tropical fruit in the aroma – passionfruit, mango, peach with a piney hint in the background.

Those sweet tropical fruits mix with zesty citrus for a light and easy taste. A crisp malt body, supports the fruit and spice flavours. Good carbonation hightens the tastebuds and makes for an enjoyable beer that finishes long, zesty, slightly tart and prickly.

I reckon the Citra version is still my favourite, but this is pretty bloody good.

Style: Belgian IPA

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij Duvel-Moortgat

Alcohol Content (ABV): 8.4% (2.19 Std Drinks)



Petrus Cherry Choc Nitro Quad

This is a beer I've been wanting to include in the beer packs for quite some time. For one reason or another I've never timed it right to get stock of this on one of our shipments, but it is time to put that right.

Just the name of this beer sounds intriguing, and there's a lot going on. A Belgian quadrupel is generally a treat on its own, let alone with the addition of real cherries and chocolate. And this is the world's only bottled quadrupel infused with nitrogen!

Treat this is you would a can of Guionness – upend the bottle and pour straight into your glass. It pours a dark mahogany reddish-brown and immediately gives off loads of cherry aroma. Add into the mix dark chocolate malt and a hint of marzipan.

The taste is a party in your mouth. An early sweetness is a mix of the six different caramel and dark roasted malts, those real cherries with the flavour of plums and raisins too. It kind of holds those flavours throughout, remaining smooth and sweet, with a low hop bitterness but the tartness of the cherries balances out the beer well. It has that dessert beer feel without becoming cloying or overly heavy in the mouthfeel.

It is definitely something unique among the Belgian beers. They've done well to meld all the different characters together into a beer that is actually quite well rounded. I probably wouldn't swap one of my favourite quads like Rochefort 10 or St Bernardus ABT 12 for this, but it's a beer I'm glad we've finally been able to share in the packs.

Style: Quadrupel

Country: Belgium

Brewer: Brouwerij De Brabandere

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



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