

FOR THE LOVE OF BEER

An overview of Beer and The Brewing Process

Session Number 6

- Belgian & French Ales Sour Ales

23 June 2011

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16A. Witbier

- **Aroma:** Moderate sweetness (often with light notes of honey and/or vanilla) with light, grainy, spicy wheat aromatics, often with a bit of tartness. Moderate perfumy coriander, often with a complex herbal, spicy, or peppery note in the background. Moderate zesty, citrusy orangey fruitiness. A low spicy-herbal hop aroma is optional, but should never overpower the other characteristics. No diacetyl. Vegetal, celery-like, or ham-like aromas are inappropriate. Spices should blend in with fruity, floral and sweet aromas and should not be overly strong.
- **Appearance:** Very pale straw to very light gold in color. The beer will be very cloudy from starch haze and/or yeast, which gives it a milky, whitish-yellow appearance. Dense, white, moussy head. Head retention should be quite good.
- **Flavor:** Pleasant sweetness (often with a honey and/or vanilla character) and a zesty, orange-citrusy fruitiness. Refreshingly crisp with a dry, often tart, finish. Can have a low wheat flavor. Optionally has a very light lactic-tasting sourness. Herbal-spicy flavors, which may include coriander and other spices, are common should be subtle and balanced, not overpowering. A spicy-earthly hop flavor is low to none, and if noticeable, never gets in the way of the spices. Hop bitterness is low to medium-low (as with a Hefeweizen), and doesn't interfere with refreshing flavors of fruit and spice, nor does it persist into the finish. Bitterness from orange pith should not be present. Vegetal, celery-like, ham-like, or soapy flavors are inappropriate. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, often having a smoothness and light creaminess from unmalted wheat and the occasional oats. Despite body and creaminess, finishes dry and often a bit tart. Effervescent character from high carbonation. Refreshing, from carbonation, light acidity, and lack of bitterness in finish. No harshness or astringency from orange pith. Should not be overly dry and thin, nor should it be thick and heavy.
- **Overall Impression:** A refreshing, elegant, tasty, moderate-strength wheat-based ale.
- **Comments:** The presence, character and degree of spicing and lactic sourness varies. Overly spiced and/or sour beers are not good examples of the style. Coriander of certain origins might give an inappropriate ham or celery character. The beer tends to be fragile and does not age well, so younger, fresher, properly handled examples are most desirable. Most examples seem to be approximately 5% ABV.
- **History:** A 400-year-old beer style that died out in the 1950s; it was later revived by Pierre Celis at Hoegaarden, and has grown steadily in popularity over time.
- **Ingredients:** About 50% unmalted wheat (traditionally soft white winter wheat) and 50% pale barley malt (usually Pils malt) constitute the grist. In some versions, up to 5-10% raw oats may be used. Spices of freshly-ground coriander and Curaçao or sometimes sweet orange peel complement the sweet aroma and are quite characteristic. Other spices (e.g., chamomile, cumin, cinnamon, Grains of Paradise) may be used for complexity but are much less prominent. Ale yeast prone to the production of mild, spicy flavors is very characteristic. In some instances a very limited lactic fermentation, or the actual addition of lactic acid, is done.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.044 – 1.052 IBUs: 10 – 20 FG: 1.008 – 1.012 SRM: 2 – 4 ABV: 4.5 – 5.5% **Commercial Examples:** Hoegaarden Wit, St. Bernardus Blanche, Celis White, Vuuve 5, Brugs Tarwebier (Blanche de Bruges), Wittekerke, Allagash White, Blanche de Bruxelles, Ommegang Witte, Avery White Rascal, Unibroue Blanche de Chambly, Sterkens White Ale, Bell's Winter White Ale, Victory Whirlwind Witbier, Hitachino Nest White Ale

16B. Belgian Pale Ale

- **Aroma:** Prominent aroma of malt with moderate fruity character and low hop aroma. Toasty, biscuity malt aroma. May have an orange- or pear-like fruitiness though not as fruity/citrusy as many other Belgian ales. Distinctive floral or spicy, low to moderate strength hop character optionally blended with background level peppery, spicy phenols. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Amber to copper in color. Clarity is very good. Creamy, rocky, white head often fades more quickly than other Belgian beers.
- **Flavor:** Fruity and lightly to moderately spicy with a soft, smooth malt and relatively light hop character and low to very low phenols. May have an orange- or pear-like fruitiness, though not as fruity/citrusy as many other Belgian ales. Has an initial soft, malty sweetness with a toasty, biscuity, nutty malt flavor. The hop flavor is low to none. The hop bitterness is medium to low, and is optionally complemented by low amounts of peppery phenols. There is a moderately dry to moderately sweet finish, with hops becoming more pronounced in those with a drier finish.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-light body. Alcohol level is restrained, and any warming character should be low if present. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Medium carbonation.
- **Overall Impression:** A fruity, moderately malty, somewhat spicy, easy-drinking, copper-colored ale.
- **Comments:** Most commonly found in the Flemish provinces of Antwerp and Brabant. Considered “everyday” beers (Category I). Compared to their higher alcohol Category S cousins, they are Belgian “session beers” for ease of drinking. Nothing should be too pronounced or dominant; balance is the key.
- **History:** Produced by breweries with roots as far back as the mid-1700s, the most well-known examples were perfected after the Second World War with some influence from Britain, including hops and yeast strains.
- **Ingredients:** Pilsner or pale ale malt contributes the bulk of the grist with (cara) Vienna and Munich malts adding color, body and complexity. Sugar is not commonly used as high gravity is not desired. Noble hops, Styrian Goldings, East Kent Goldings or Fuggles are commonly used. Yeasts prone to moderate production of phenols are often used but fermentation temperatures should be kept moderate to limit this character.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.054 IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.014 SRM: 8 – 14 ABV: 4.8 – 5.5% **Commercial Examples:** De Koninck, Speciale Palm, Dobble Palm, Russian River Perdition, Ginder Ale, Op-Ale, St. Pieters Zinnebir, Brewer’s Art House Pale Ale, Avery Karma, Eisenbahn Pale Ale, Ommegast Rare Vos (unusual in its 6.5% ABV strength)

16C. Saison

- **Aroma:** High fruitiness with low to moderate hop aroma and moderate to no herb, spice and alcohol aroma. Fruity esters dominate the aroma and are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges or lemons. A low to medium-high spicy or floral hop aroma is usually present. A moderate spice aroma (from actual spice additions and/or yeast-derived phenols) complements the other aromatics. When phenolics are present they tend to be peppery rather than clove-like. A low to moderate sourness or acidity may be present, but should not overwhelm other characteristics. Spice, hop and sour aromatics typically increase with the strength of the beer. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity, and should not be hot or solventy. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Often a distinctive pale orange but may be golden or amber in color. There is no correlation between strength and color. Long-lasting, dense, rocky white to ivory head resulting in characteristic “Belgian lace” on the glass as it fades. Clarity is poor to good though haze is not unexpected in this type of unfiltered farmhouse beer. Effervescent.
- **Flavor:** Combination of fruity and spicy flavors supported by a soft malt character, a low to moderate alcohol presence and tart sourness. Extremely high attenuation gives a characteristic dry finish. The fruitiness is frequently citrusy (orange- or lemon-like). The addition of one of more spices serve to add complexity, but shouldn’t dominate in the balance. Low peppery yeast-derived phenols may be present instead of or in addition to spice additions; phenols tend to be lower than in many other Belgian beers, and complement the bitterness. Hop flavor is low to moderate, and is generally spicy or earthy in character. Hop bitterness may be moderate to high, but should not overwhelm fruity esters, spices, and malt. Malt character is light but provides a sufficient background for the other flavors. A low to moderate tart sourness may be present, but should not overwhelm other flavors. Spices, hop bitterness and flavor, and sourness commonly increase with the strength of the beer while sweetness decreases. No hot alcohol or solventy character. High carbonation, moderately sulfate water, and high attenuation give a very dry finish with a long, bitter, sometimes spicy aftertaste. The perceived bitterness is often higher than the IBU level would suggest. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Alcohol level can be medium to medium-high, though the warming character is low to medium. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Very high carbonation with an effervescent quality. There is enough prickly acidity on the tongue to balance the very dry finish. A low to moderate tart character may be present but should be refreshing and not to the point of puckering.
- **Overall Impression:** A refreshing, medium to strong fruity/spicy ale with a distinctive yellow-orange color, highly carbonated, well hopped, and dry with a quenching acidity.

16C. Saison (continued)

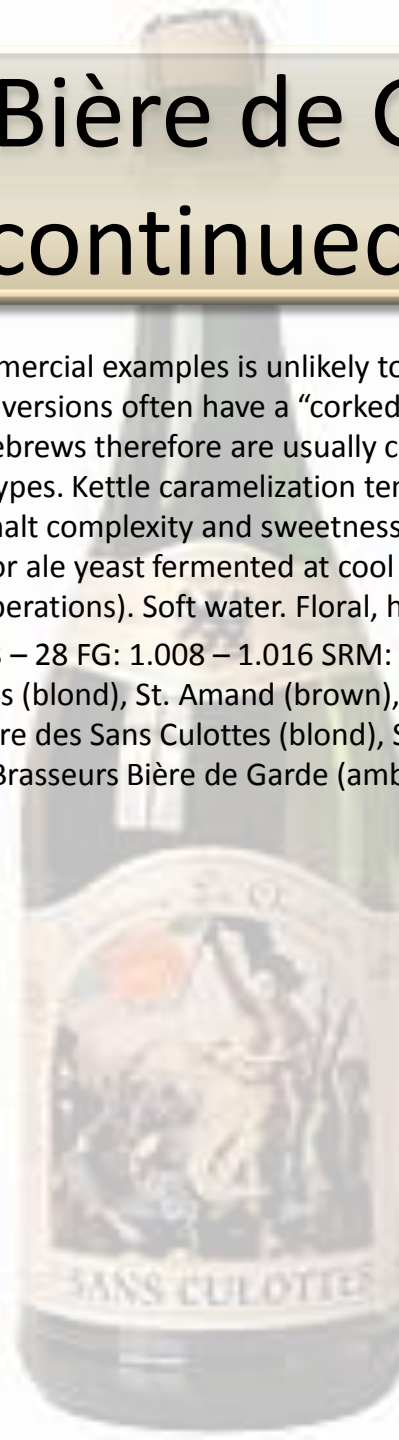
- **Comments:** Varying strength examples exist (table beers of about 5% strength, typical export beers of about 6.5%, and stronger versions of 8%+). Strong versions (6.5%-9.5%) and darker versions (copper to dark brown/black) should be entered as Belgian Specialty Ales (16E). Sweetness decreases and spice, hop and sour character increases with strength. Herb and spice additions often reflect the indigenous varieties available at the brewery. High carbonation and extreme attenuation (85-95%) helps bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. All of these beers share somewhat higher levels of acidity than other Belgian styles while the optional sour flavor is often a variable house character of a particular brewery.
- **History:** A seasonal summer style produced in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium. Originally brewed at the end of the cool season to last through the warmer months before refrigeration was common. It had to be sturdy enough to last for months but not too strong to be quenching and refreshing in the summer. It is now brewed year-round in tiny, artisanal breweries whose buildings reflect their origins as farmhouses.
- **Ingredients:** Pilsner malt dominates the grist though a portion of Vienna and/or Munich malt contributes color and complexity. Sometimes contains other grains such as wheat and spelt. Adjuncts such as sugar and honey can also serve to add complexity and thin the body. Hop bitterness and flavor may be more noticeable than in many other Belgian styles. A saison is sometimes dry-hopped. Noble hops, Styrian or East Kent Goldings are commonly used. A wide variety of herbs and spices are often used to add complexity and uniqueness in the stronger versions, but should always meld well with the yeast and hop character. Varying degrees of acidity and/or sourness can be created by the use of gypsum, acidulated malt, a sour mash or Lactobacillus. Hard water, common to most of Wallonia, can accentuate the bitterness and dry finish.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.065 IBUs: 20 – 35 FG: 1.002 – 1.012 SRM: 5 – 14 ABV: 5 – 7% **Commercial Examples:** Saison Dupont Vieille Provision; Fantôme Saison D'Erezée - Printemps; Saison de Pipaix; Saison Regal; Saison Voisin; Lefebvre Saison 1900; Ellezelloise Saison 2000; Saison Silly; Southampton Saison; New Belgium Saison; Pizza Port SPF 45; Lost Abbey Red Barn Ale; Ommegang Hennepin

16D. Bière de Garde

- **Aroma:** Prominent malty sweetness, often with a complex, light to moderate toasty character. Some caramelization is acceptable. Low to moderate esters. Little to no hop aroma (may be a bit spicy or herbal). Commercial versions will often have a musty, woody, cellar-like character that is difficult to achieve in homebrew. Paler versions will still be malty but will lack richer, deeper aromatics and may have a bit more hops. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Three main variations exist (blond, amber and brown), so color can range from golden blonde to reddish-bronze to chestnut brown. Clarity is good to poor, although haze is not unexpected in this type of often unfiltered beer. Well-formed head, generally white to off-white (varies by beer color), supported by high carbonation.
- **Flavor:** Medium to high malt flavor often with a toasty, toffee-like or caramel sweetness. Malt flavors and complexity tend to increase as beer color darkens. Low to moderate esters and alcohol flavors. Medium-low hop bitterness provides some support, but the balance is always tilted toward the malt. The malt flavor lasts into the finish but the finish is medium-dry to dry, never cloying. Alcohol can provide some additional dryness in the finish. Low to no hop flavor, although paler versions can have slightly higher levels of herbal or spicy hop flavor (which can also come from the yeast). Smooth, well-lagered character. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-light (lean) body, often with a smooth, silky character. Moderate to high carbonation. Moderate alcohol, but should be very smooth and never hot.
- **Overall Impression:** A fairly strong, malt-accentuated, lagered artisanal farmhouse beer.
- **Comments:** Three main variations are included in the style: the brown (brune), the blond (blonde), and the amber (ambrée). The darker versions will have more malt character, while the paler versions can have more hops (but still are malt-focused beers). A related style is Bière de Mars, which is brewed in March (Mars) for present use and will not age as well. Attenuation rates are in the 80-85% range. Some fuller-bodied examples exist, but these are somewhat rare.
- **History:** Name literally means “beer which has been kept or lagered.” A traditional artisanal farmhouse ale from Northern France brewed in early spring and kept in cold cellars for consumption in warmer weather. It is now brewed year-round. Related to the Belgian Saison style, the main difference is that the Bière de Garde is rounder, richer, sweeter, malt-focused, often has a “cellar” character, and lacks the spicing and tartness of a Saison.

16D. Bière de Garde (continued)

- **Ingredients:** The “cellar” character in commercial examples is unlikely to be duplicated in homebrews as it comes from indigenous yeasts and molds. Commercial versions often have a “corked”, dry, astringent character that is often incorrectly identified as “cellar-like.” Homebrews therefore are usually cleaner. Base malts vary by beer color, but usually include pale, Vienna and Munich types. Kettle caramelization tends to be used more than crystal malts, when present. Darker versions will have richer malt complexity and sweetness from crystal-type malts. Sugar may be used to add flavor and aid in the dry finish. Lager or ale yeast fermented at cool ale temperatures, followed by long cold conditioning (4-6 weeks for commercial operations). Soft water. Floral, herbal or spicy continental hops.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.060 – 1.080 IBUs: 18 – 28 FG: 1.008 – 1.016 SRM: 6 – 19 ABV: 6 – 8.5% **Commercial Examples:** Jenlain (amber), Jenlain Bière de Printemps (blond), St. Amand (brown), Ch’Ti Brun (brown), Ch’Ti Blond (blond), La Choulette (all 3 versions), La Choulette Bière des Sans Culottes (blond), Saint Sylvestre 3 Monts (blond), Biere Nouvelle (brown), Castelain (blond), Jade (amber), Brasseurs Bière de Garde (amber), Southampton Bière de Garde (amber), Lost Abbey Avante Garde (blond)



16E. Belgian Specialty Ale

- **Aroma:** Variable. Most exhibit varying amounts of fruity esters, spicy phenols and/or yeast-borne aromatics. Aromas from actual spice additions may be present. Hop aroma may be none to high, and may include a dry-hopped character. Malt aroma may be low to high, and may include character of non-barley grains such as wheat or rye. Some may include aromas of Belgian microbiota, most commonly *Brettanomyces* and/or *Lactobacillus*. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Variable. Color varies considerably from pale gold to very dark. Clarity may be hazy to clear. Head retention is usually good. Generally moderate to high carbonation.
- **Flavor:** Variable. A great variety of flavors are found in these beers. Maltiness may be light to quite rich. Hop flavor and bitterness may be low to high. Spicy flavors may be imparted by yeast (phenolics) and/or actual spice additions. May include characteristics of grains other than barley, such as wheat or rye. May include flavors produced by Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. May include flavors from adjuncts such as caramelized sugar syrup or honey.
- **Mouthfeel:** Variable. Some are well-attenuated, thus fairly light-bodied for their original gravity, while others are thick and rich. Most are moderately to highly carbonated. A warming sensation from alcohol may be present in stronger examples. A “mouth puckering” sensation may be present from acidity.
- **Overall Impression:** Variable. This category encompasses a wide range of Belgian ales produced by truly artisanal brewers more concerned with creating unique products than in increasing sales.
- **Comments:** This is a catch-all category for any Belgian-style beer not fitting any other Belgian style category. The category can be used for clones of specific beers (e.g., Orval, La Chouffe); to produce a beer fitting a broader style that doesn’t have its own category; or to create an artisanal or experimental beer of the brewer’s own choosing (e.g., strong Belgian golden ale with spices, something unique). Creativity is the only limit in brewing but the entrants must identify what is special about their entry. This category may be used as an “incubator” for recognized styles for which there is not yet a formal BJCP category. Some styles falling into this classification include:
- Blond Trappist table beer, Artisanal Blond, Artisanal Amber, Artisanal Brown, Belgian-style Barleywines, Trappist Quadrupels, Belgian Spiced Christmas Beers, Belgian Stout, Belgian IPA, Strong and/or Dark Saison and Fruit-based Flanders Red/Brown

16E. Belgian Specialty Ale (continued)

- *The judges must understand the brewer's intent in order to properly judge an entry in this category. THE BREWER MUST SPECIFY EITHER THE BEER BEING CLONED, THE NEW STYLE BEING PRODUCED OR THE SPECIAL INGREDIENTS OR PROCESSES USED. Additional background information on the style and/or beer may be provided to judges to assist in the judging, including style parameters or detailed descriptions of the beer.* Beers fitting other Belgian categories should not be entered in this category. **History:** Unique beers of small, independent Belgian breweries that have come to enjoy local popularity but may be far less well-known outside of their own regions. Many have attained “cult status” in the U.S. (and other parts of the world) and now owe a significant portion of their sales to export.
- **Ingredients:** May include herbs and/or spices. May include unusual grains and malts, though the grain character should be apparent if it is a key ingredient. May include adjuncts such as caramelized sugar syrup and honey. May include Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. Unusual techniques, such as blending, may be used through primarily to arrive at a particular result. The process alone does not make a beer unique to a blind judging panel if the final product does not taste different.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies IBUs: Varies FG: Varies SRM: Varies ABV: Varies **Commercial Examples:** Orval; De Dolle's Arabier, Oerbier, Boskeun and Stille Nacht; La Chouffe, McChouffe, Chouffe Bok and N'ice Chouffe; Ellezelloise Hercule Stout and Quintine Amber; Unibroue Ephemere, Maudite, Don de Dieu, etc.; Minty; Zatte Bie; Caracole Amber, Saxo and Nostradamus; Silenrieu Sara and Joseph; Fantôme Black Ghost and Speciale Noël; Dupont Moinette, Moinette Brune, and Avec Les Bons Voeux de la Brasserie Dupont; St. Fullien Noël; Gouden Carolus Noël; Affligem Noël; Guldenburg and Pere Noël; De Ranke XX Bitter and Guldenberg; Poperings Hommelbier; Bush (Scaldis); Moinette Brune; Grottenbier; La Trappe Quadrupel; Weyerbacher QUAD; Bière de Miel; Verboden Vrucht; New Belgium 1554 Black Ale; Cantillon Iris; Russian River Temptation; Lost Abbey Cuvee de Tomme and Devotion, Lindemans Kriek and Framboise, and many more

17A. Berliner Weisse

- **Aroma:** A sharply sour, somewhat acidic character is dominant. Can have up to a moderately fruity character. The fruitiness may increase with age and a flowery character may develop. A mild *Brettanomyces* aroma may be present. No hop aroma, diacetyl, or DMS.
- **Appearance:** Very pale straw in color. Clarity ranges from clear to somewhat hazy. Large, dense, white head with poor retention due to high acidity and low protein and hop content. Always effervescent.
- **Flavor:** Clean lactic sourness dominates and can be quite strong, although not so acidic as a lambic. Some complementary bready or grainy wheat flavor is generally noticeable. Hop bitterness is very low. A mild *Brettanomyces* character may be detected, as may a restrained fruitiness (both are optional). No hop flavor. No diacetyl or DMS.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light body. Very dry finish. Very high carbonation. No sensation of alcohol.
- **Overall Impression:** A very pale, sour, refreshing, low-alcohol wheat ale.
- **Comments:** In Germany, it is classified as a *Schankbier* denoting a small beer of starting gravity in the range 7-8°P. Often served with the addition of a shot of sugar syrups ('mit schuss') flavored with raspberry ('himbeer') or woodruff ('waldmeister') or even mixed with Pils to counter the substantial sourness. Has been described by some as the most purely refreshing beer in the world.
- **History:** A regional specialty of Berlin; referred to by Napoleon's troops in 1809 as "the Champagne of the North" due to its lively and elegant character. Only two traditional breweries still produce the product.
- **Ingredients:** Wheat malt content is typically 50% of the grist (as with all German wheat beers) with the remainder being Pilsner malt. A symbiotic fermentation with top-fermenting yeast and *Lactobacillus delbrückii* provides the sharp sourness, which may be enhanced by blending of beers of different ages during fermentation and by extended cool aging. Hop bitterness is extremely low. A single decoction mash with mash hopping is traditional.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.028 – 1.032 IBUs: 3 – 8 FG: 1.003 – 1.006 SRM: 2 – 3 ABV: 2.8 – 3.8% **Commercial Examples:** Schultheiss Berliner Weisse, Berliner Kindl Weisse, Nodding Head Berliner Weisse, Weißenstephan 1809 (unusual in its 5% ABV), Bahnhof Berliner Style Weisse, Southampton Berliner Weisse, Bethlehem Berliner Weisse, Three Floyds Deesko

17B. Flanders Red Ale

- **Aroma:** Complex fruitiness with complementary malt. Fruitiness is high, and reminiscent of black cherries, oranges, plums or red currants. There is often some vanilla and/or chocolate notes. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. The sour, acidic aroma ranges from complementary to intense. No hop aroma. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary aroma.
- **Appearance:** Deep red, burgundy to reddish-brown in color. Good clarity. White to very pale tan head. Average to good head retention.
- **Flavor:** Intense fruitiness commonly includes plum, orange, black cherry or red currant flavors. A mild vanilla and/or chocolate character is often present. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. Sour, acidic character ranges from complementary to intense. Malty flavors range from complementary to prominent. Generally as the sour character increases, the sweet character blends to more of a background flavor (and vice versa). No hop flavor. Restrained hop bitterness. An acidic, tannic bitterness is often present in low to moderate amounts, and adds an aged red wine-like character with a long, dry finish. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary flavor.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium bodied. Low to medium carbonation. Low to medium astringency, like a well-aged red wine, often with a prickly acidity. Deceivingly light and crisp on the palate although a somewhat sweet finish is not uncommon.
- **Overall Impression:** A complex, sour, red wine-like Belgian-style ale.
- **Comments:** Long aging and blending of young and well-aged beer often occurs, adding to the smoothness and complexity, though the aged product is sometimes released as a connoisseur's beer. Known as the Burgundy of Belgium, it is more wine-like than any other beer style. The reddish color is a product of the malt although an extended, less-than-rolling portion of the boil may help add an attractive Burgundy hue. Aging will also darken the beer. The Flanders red is more acetic and the fruity flavors more reminiscent of a red wine than an Oud Bruin. Can have an apparent attenuation of up to 98%.
- **History:** The indigenous beer of West Flanders, typified by the products of the Rodenbach brewery, established in 1820 in West Flanders but reflective of earlier brewing traditions. The beer is aged for up to two years, often in huge oaken barrels which contain the resident bacteria necessary to sour the beer. It was once common in Belgium and England to blend old beer with young to balance the sourness and acidity found in aged beer. While blending of batches for consistency is now common among larger breweries, this type of blending is a fading art.
- **Ingredients:** A base of Vienna and/or Munich malts, light to medium cara-malts, and a small amount of Special B are used with up to 20% maize. Low alpha acid continental hops are commonly used (avoid high alpha or distinctive American hops). Saccharomyces, Lactobacillus and Brettanomyces (and acetobacter) contribute to the fermentation and eventual flavor.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.048 – 1.057 IBUs: 10 – 25 FG: 1.002 – 1.012 SRM: 10 – 16 ABV: 4.6 – 6.5% **Commercial Examples:** Rodenbach Klassiek, Rodenbach Grand Cru, Bellegems Bruin, Duchesse de Bourgogne, New Belgium La Folie, Petrus Oud Bruin, Southampton Flanders Red Ale, Verhaege Vichtenaar, Monk's Cafe Flanders Red Ale, New Glarus Enigma, Panil Barriquée, Mestreechs Aajt

17C. Flanders Brown Ale/Oud Bruin

- **Aroma:** Complex combination of fruity esters and rich malt character. Esters commonly reminiscent of raisins, plums, figs, dates, black cherries or prunes. A malt character of caramel, toffee, orange, treacle or chocolate is also common. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. A sherry-like character may be present and generally denotes an aged example. A low sour aroma may be present, and can modestly increase with age but should not grow to a noticeable acetic/vinegary character. Hop aroma absent. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary aroma.
- **Appearance:** Dark reddish-brown to brown in color. Good clarity. Average to good head retention. Ivory to light tan head color.
- **Flavor:** Malty with fruity complexity and some caramelization character. Fruitiness commonly includes dark fruits such as raisins, plums, figs, dates, black cherries or prunes. A malt character of caramel, toffee, orange, treacle or chocolate is also common. Spicy phenols can be present in low amounts for complexity. A slight sourness often becomes more pronounced in well-aged examples, along with some sherry-like character, producing a “sweet-and-sour” profile. The sourness should not grow to a notable acetic/vinegary character. Hop flavor absent. Restrained hop bitterness. Low oxidation is appropriate as a point of complexity. Diacetyl is perceived only in very minor quantities, if at all, as a complementary flavor.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to medium-full body. Low to moderate carbonation. No astringency with a sweet and tart finish.
- **Overall Impression:** A malty, fruity, aged, somewhat sour Belgian-style brown ale.
- **Comments:** Long aging and blending of young and aged beer may occur, adding smoothness and complexity and balancing any harsh, sour character. A deeper malt character distinguishes these beers from Flanders red ales. This style was designed to lay down so examples with a moderate aged character are considered superior to younger examples. As in fruit lambics, Oud Bruin can be used as a base for fruit-flavored beers such as kriel (cherries) or frambozen (raspberries), though these should be entered in the classic-style fruit beer category. The Oud Bruin is less acetic and maltier than a Flanders Red, and the fruity flavors are more malt-oriented.
- **History:** An “old ale” tradition, indigenous to East Flanders, typified by the products of the Liefman brewery (now owned by Riva), which has roots back to the 1600s. Historically brewed as a “provision beer” that would develop some sourness as it aged. These beers were typically more sour than current commercial examples. While Flanders red beers are aged in oak, the brown beers are warm aged in stainless steel.
- **Ingredients:** A base of Pils malt with judicious amounts of dark cara malts and a tiny bit of black or roast malt. Often includes maize. Low alpha acid continental hops are typical (avoid high alpha or distinctive American hops). *Saccharomyces* and *Lactobacillus* (and *acetobacter*) contribute to the fermentation and eventual flavor. *Lactobacillus* reacts poorly to elevated levels of alcohol. A sour mash or acidulated malt may also be used to develop the sour character without introducing *Lactobacillus*. Water high in carbonates is typical of its home region and will buffer the acidity of darker malts and the lactic sourness. Magnesium in the water accentuates the sourness.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.074 IBUs: 20 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.012 SRM: 15 – 22 ABV: 4 – 8% **Commercial Examples:** Liefman’s Goudenband, Liefman’s Odnar, Liefman’s Oud Bruin, Ichtegem Old Brown, Riva Vondel

17D. Straight (Unblended) Lambic

- **Aroma:** A decidedly sour/acidic aroma is often dominant in young examples, but may be more subdued with age as it blends with aromas described as barnyard, earthy, goatly, hay, horsey, and horse blanket. A mild oak and/or citrus aroma is considered favorable. An enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy aroma is unfavorable. Older versions are commonly fruity with aromas of apples or even honey. No hop aroma. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Pale yellow to deep golden in color. Age tends to darken the beer. Clarity is hazy to good. Younger versions are often cloudy, while older ones are generally clear. Head retention is generally poor. Head color is white.
- **Flavor:** Young examples are often noticeably sour and/or lactic, but aging can bring this character more in balance with the malt, wheat and barnyard characteristics. Fruity flavors are simpler in young lambics and more complex in the older examples, where they are reminiscent of apples or other light fruits, rhubarb, or honey. Some oak or citrus flavor (often grapefruit) is occasionally noticeable. An enteric, smoky or cigar-like character is undesirable. Hop bitterness is low to none. No hop flavor. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. In spite of the low finishing gravity, the many mouth-filling flavors prevent the beer from tasting like water. As a rule of thumb lambic dries with age, which makes dryness a reasonable indicator of age. Has a medium to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Virtually to completely uncarbonated.
- **Overall Impression:** Complex, sour/acidic, pale, wheat-based ale fermented by a variety of Belgian microbiota.
- **Comments:** Straight lambics are single-batch, unblended beers. Since they are unblended, the straight lambic is often a true product of the “house character” of a brewery and will be more variable than a gueuze. They are generally served young (6 months) and on tap as cheap, easy-drinking beers without any filling carbonation. Younger versions tend to be one-dimensionally sour since a complex Brett character often takes upwards of a year to develop. An enteric character is often indicative of a lambic that is too young. A noticeable vinegary or cidery character is considered a fault by Belgian brewers. Since the wild yeast and bacteria will ferment ALL sugars, they are bottled only when they have completely fermented. Lambic is served uncarbonated, while gueuze is served effervescent. IBUs are approximate since aged hops are used; Belgians use hops for anti-bacterial properties more than bittering in lambics.
- **History:** Spontaneously fermented sour ales from the area in and around Brussels (the Senne Valley) stem from a farmhouse brewing tradition several centuries old. Their numbers are constantly dwindling.

17D. Straight (Unblended) Lambic (continued)

- **Ingredients:** Unmalted wheat (30-40%), Pilsner malt and aged (surannes) hops (3 years) are used. The aged hops are used more for preservative effects than bitterness, and makes actual bitterness levels difficult to estimate. Traditionally these beers are spontaneously fermented with naturally-occurring yeast and bacteria in predominately oaken barrels. Home-brewed and craft-brewed versions are more typically made with pure cultures of yeast commonly including *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* in an attempt to recreate the effects of the dominant microbiota of Brussels and the surrounding countryside of the Senne River valley. Cultures taken from bottles are sometimes used but there is no simple way of knowing what organisms are still viable.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.054 IBUs: 0 – 10 FG: 1.001 – 1.010 SRM: 3 – 7 ABV: 5 – 6.5% **Commercial Examples:** The only bottled version readily available is Cantillon Grand Cru Bruocsella of whatever single batch vintage the brewer deems worthy to bottle. De Cam sometimes bottles their very old (5 years) lambic. In and around Brussels there are specialty cafes that often have draught lambics from traditional brewers or blenders such as Boon, De Cam, Cantillon, Drie Fonteinen, Lindemans, Timmermans and Girardin.



17E. Gueuze

- **Aroma:** A moderately sour/acidic aroma blends with aromas described as barnyard, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, and horse blanket. While some may be more dominantly sour/acidic, balance is the key and denotes a better gueuze. Commonly fruity with aromas of citrus fruits (often grapefruit), apples or other light fruits, rhubarb, or honey. A very mild oak aroma is considered favorable. An enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy aroma is unfavorable. No hop aroma. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Golden in color. Clarity is excellent (unless the bottle was shaken). A thick rocky, mousse-like, white head seems to last forever. Always effervescent.
- **Flavor:** A moderately sour/acidic character is classically in balance with the malt, wheat and barnyard characteristics. A low, complementary sweetness may be present but higher levels are uncharacteristic. While some may be more dominantly sour, balance is the key and denotes a better gueuze. A varied fruit flavor is common, and can have a honey-like character. A mild vanilla and/or oak flavor is occasionally noticeable. An enteric, smoky or cigar-like character is undesirable. Hop bitterness is generally absent but a very low hop bitterness may occasionally be perceived. No hop flavor. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. Has a low to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Some versions have a low warming character. Highly carbonated.
- **Overall Impression:** Complex, pleasantly sour/acidic, balanced, pale, wheat-based ale fermented by a variety of Belgian microbiota.
- **Comments:** Gueuze is traditionally produced by mixing one, two, and three-year old lambic. “Young” lambic contains fermentable sugars while old lambic has the characteristic “wild” taste of the Senne River valley. A good gueuze is not the most pungent, but possesses a full and tantalizing bouquet, a sharp aroma, and a soft, velvety flavor. Lambic is served uncarbonated, while gueuze is served effervescent. IBUs are approximate since aged hops are used; Belgians use hops for anti-bacterial properties more than bittering in lambics. Products marked “oude” or “ville” are considered most traditional.
- **History:** Spontaneously fermented sour ales from the area in and around Brussels (the Senne Valley) stem from a farmhouse brewing tradition several centuries old. Their numbers are constantly dwindling and some are untraditionally sweetening their products (post-fermentation) to make them more palatable to a wider audience.
- **Ingredients:** Unmalted wheat (30-40%), Pilsner malt and aged (surannes) hops (3 years) are used. The aged hops are used more for preservative effects than bitterness, and makes actual bitterness levels difficult to estimate. Traditionally these beers are spontaneously fermented with naturally-occurring yeast and bacteria in predominately oaken barrels. Home-brewed and craft-brewed versions are more typically made with pure cultures of yeast commonly including *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* in an attempt to recreate the effects of the dominant microbiota of Brussels and the surrounding countryside of the Senne River valley. Cultures taken from bottles are sometimes used but there is no simple way of knowing what organisms are still viable.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.060 IBUs: 0 – 10 FG: 1.000 – 1.006 SRM: 3 – 7 ABV: 5 – 8% **Commercial Examples:** Boon Oude Gueuze, Boon Oude Gueuze Mariage Parfait, De Cam Gueuze, De Cam/Drei Fonteinen Millennium Gueuze, Drie Fonteinen Oud Gueuze, Cantillon Gueuze, Hanssens Oude Gueuze, Lindemans Gueuze Cuvée René, Girardin Gueuze (Black Label), Mort Subite (Unfiltered) Gueuze, Oud Beersel Oude Gueuze

17F. Fruit Lambic

- **Aroma:** The fruit which has been added to the beer should be the dominant aroma. A low to moderately sour/acidic character blends with aromas described as barnyard, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, and horse blanket (and thus should be recognizable as a lambic). The fruit aroma commonly blends with the other aromas. An enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy aroma is unfavorable. No hop aroma. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** The variety of fruit generally determines the color though lighter-colored fruit may have little effect on the color. The color intensity may fade with age. Clarity is often good, although some fruit will not drop bright. A thick rocky, mousse-like head, sometimes a shade of fruit, is generally long-lasting. Always effervescent.
- **Flavor:** The fruit added to the beer should be evident. A low to moderate sour and more commonly (sometimes high) acidic character is present. The classic barnyard characteristics may be low to high. When young, the beer will present its full fruity taste. As it ages, the lambic taste will become dominant at the expense of the fruit character – thus fruit lambics are not intended for long aging. A low, complementary sweetness may be present, but higher levels are uncharacteristic. A mild vanilla and/or oak flavor is occasionally noticeable. An enteric, smoky or cigar-like character is undesirable. Hop bitterness is generally absent. No hop flavor. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Light to medium-light body. In spite of the low finishing gravity, the many mouth-filling flavors prevent the beer from tasting like water. Has a low to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Some versions have a low warming character. Highly carbonated.
- **Overall Impression:** Complex, fruity, pleasantly sour/acidic, balanced, pale, wheat-based ale fermented by a variety of Belgian microbiota. A lambic with fruit, not just a fruit beer.
- **Comments:** Fruit-based lambics are often produced like gueuze by mixing one, two, and three-year old lambic. “Young” lambic contains fermentable sugars while old lambic has the characteristic “wild” taste of the Senne River valley. Fruit is commonly added halfway through aging and the yeast and bacteria will ferment all sugars from the fruit. Fruit may also be added to unblended lambic. The most traditional styles of fruit lambics include kriek (cherries), framboise (raspberries) and druivenlambik (muscat grapes). **ENTRANT MUST SPECIFY THE TYPE OF FRUIT(S) USED IN MAKING THE LAMBIC.** Any overly sweet lambics (e.g., Lindemans or Belle Vue clones) would do better entered in the 16E Belgian Specialty category since this category does not describe beers with that character. IBUs are approximate since aged hops are used; Belgians use hops for anti-bacterial properties more than bittering in lambics.

17F. Fruit Lambic (continued)

- **History:** Spontaneously fermented sour ales from the area in and around Brussels (the Senne Valley) stem from a farmhouse brewing tradition several centuries old. Their numbers are constantly dwindling and some are untraditionally sweetening their products (post-fermentation) with sugar or sweet fruit to make them more palatable to a wider audience. Fruit was traditionally added to lambic or gueuze, either by the blender or publican, to increase the variety of beers available in local cafes.
- **Ingredients:** Unmalted wheat (30-40%), Pilsner malt and aged (surannes) hops (3 years) are used. The aged hops are used more for preservative effects than bitterness, and makes actual bitterness levels difficult to estimate. Traditional products use 10-30% fruit (25%, if cherry). Fruits traditionally used include tart cherries (with pits), raspberries or Muscat grapes. More recent examples include peaches, apricots or merlot grapes. Tart or acidic fruit is traditionally used as its purpose is not to sweeten the beer but to add a new dimension. Traditionally these beers are spontaneously fermented with naturally-occurring yeast and bacteria in predominately oaken barrels. Home-brewed and craft-brewed versions are more typically made with pure cultures of yeast commonly including *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus* and *Lactobacillus* in an attempt to recreate the effects of the dominant microbiota of Brussels and the surrounding countryside of the Senne River valley. Cultures taken from bottles are sometimes used but there is no simple way of knowing what organisms are still viable.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.040 – 1.060 IBUs: 0 – 10 FG: 1.000 – 1.010 SRM: 3 – 7 (varies w/ fruit) ABV: 5 – 7% **Commercial Examples:** Boon Framboise Mariage Parfait, Boon Kriek Mariage Parfait, Boon Oude Kriek, Cantillon Fou' Foune (apricot), Cantillon Kriek, Cantillon Lou Pepe Kriek, Cantillon Lou Pepe Framboise, Cantillon Rose de Gambrinus, Cantillon St. Lamvinus (merlot grape), Cantillon Vigneronne (Muscat grape), De Cam Oude Kriek, Drie Fonteinen Kriek, Girardin Kriek, Hanssens Oude Kriek, Oud Beersel Kriek, Mort Subite Kriek