



# **BEER BUZZ tours & clubs**

## **Belgian Beer Styles**

### **Lambic**

These sour wheat beers, from the area around Brussels are neither lagers nor ales. Instead they rely on “spontaneous fermentation” a process whereby “wild yeasts” naturally occurring in the air around the brewery are allowed to come into contact with the wort.

The resultant fermentation is slow and traditionally takes place in oak barrels. They are heavily hopped to prevent oxidation but the hops used are old and therefore low in bitterness since bitter and sour flavours do not mix well.

### **Abbey Beers**

Most famously including the Trappist beers of Chimay, Orval, Westmalle, Rochefort, Achel and Westvleteren. Not a style as such since the beers produced vary greatly. However, they are all ales and are mostly sold bottle conditioned.

These days they are often more commercial than you might imagine but that does not dent their popularity and most of the Trappist breweries are working at maximum capacity.

Also including the commercially brewed Abbey ales that no longer have any direct connection with the abbey for which they are named. These vary enormously in quality although are mostly categorised as “Dubbel”, “Triple” and “Grand Cru”.

### **Blond Ales**

They're blond and they're ales, therefore they look like cheap lager but taste better. Various sub-styles exist (not unusual in Belgium) but these are mostly to do with differing alcohol levels and hop characters.

### **Amber Ales**

In the north these beers manifest themselves as Pale Ales and in the south Saison (Biere de Garde in France). Many modern breweries in Belgium as well as France label these beers “Ambrée”.

### **Brown Ales**

Brown ales are produced to many different strengths and varying sweetness. They are often lightly hopped choosing instead to rely on darker malts to give the beer bitterness. Arguably these beers vary too much to be categorised as one style especially as it includes oak aged, sour beers as well.

### **Black Beer**

Mostly Stouts and Porters but this being Belgium some fall into neither category.



## White Beer

Brewed using a proportion (30 to 40 percent) of wheat. Mostly unmalted but can contain some malted wheat. White Beers are often spiced, classically with coriander and orange peel. This style was pretty much finished until revived by Pierre Celis of Hoegaarden fame in the mid-sixties.

## Strong Ales

There comes a point when the flavours produced by fermentation outweigh those emanating from the malt variety (colour). A separate style is therefore required. Somewhat akin to Barley Wine, these beers are made for quiet contemplation not session drinking.

## Seasonal and Other

In reality there are many more styles of Belgian beer than are listed on this page so join **BEER BUZZ tours** on a trip to Belgium and see how many you can discover!