

BELGIAN BEERFEST



STYLE GUIDELINES

CATEGORY	STYLES
1. Light Coloured Ales	1.1 Belgian Single 1.2 Belgian Blonde Ale 1.3 Belgian Golden Strong Ale 1.4 Tripel
2. Dark Coloured Ales	2.1 Dubbel 2.2 Bier de Garde (Specify Blond, Amber or Brown) 2.3 Belgian Dark Strong Ale
3. Summer Ales	3.1 Witbier 3.2 Belgian Pale Ale 3.3 Belgian IPA
4. Saison	4.1 Saison (Specify colour: Pale/Dark Specify strength: Table/Standard/Super)
5. Wild Beers	5.1 Straight Lambic 5.2 Flanders Brown Ale/Oud Bruin 5.3 Gueuze 5.4 Flanders Red Ale 5.5 Fruit Lambic
6. Belgian Speciality	6.1 Belgian Speciality (description required)

PREFACE TO BELGIAN BEERFEST GUIDELINES

Notes to All:

The style categories, the styles of beer in each category and supporting style documentation are all reviewed each year to maintain their appropriateness to the competition. This issue of the guidelines has been reviewed to confirm to the BJCP 2021 Style guide. The exception is Cat 6 – Style 6.1 Belgian Speciality Ale which uses the BJCP 2008 Style guide.

Belgian IPA style was introduced into the 2020 competition and from 2023, Belgian Speciality style is now listed as a separate category (Cat 6).

Notes to Brewers:

Some styles require additional information to help judges to fully evaluate your beer. Read the guidelines carefully and include the required information with your entry. Where required information is missing, it can result in a misjudged beer.

Bier de Garde entries require the colour (blond, amber, brown) to be specified

Saison entries require the colour (pale/dark) and strength (table/standard/super) to be specified.

When you enter a Belgian specialty or Belgian experimental beer not identified in the guidelines, or uses unusual ingredients, please provide supplemental information so the judges can properly understand your beer and brewing intent.

Notes to Organizers:

Please ensure that supplemental information submitted by brewers is available to the judges.

When brewers omit required information, please seek clarification from the brewers before the competition date where possible.

Notes to Judges:

The *categories* are arbitrary groupings of beers with similar sensory characteristics. Styles are not necessarily related to each other within the same category. The purpose of the category structure is to group those styles of beers which provide a logical sensory approach to their judging.

Understand that a single beer does not define most beer styles. Many styles are quite broad and can encompass multiple stylistically accurate variants. Do not let your understanding of a single beer limit your appreciation of the full range of each beer style.

You are free to judge beers in a flight in whatever order makes sense to you, although you should try to sequence the beers in a manner that allows you to preserve your senses and to fairly evaluate each beer.

Pay careful attention to the modifiers used in describing the styles. Look for guidance on the magnitude and quality of each characteristic. Notice that many characteristics are optional; beers not evidencing these non-required elements should not be marked down. Phrases such as “may have”, “can contain”, “might feature”, “is acceptable”, “is appropriate”, “is typical”, etc. all indicate optional elements. Required elements are generally written as declaratory phrases, or use words such as “must” or “should”. Elements that must not be present often use phrases such as “is inappropriate”, “no”, or “must not”.

Seek to understand the intent of the style categories and to judge each beer in its entirety. Don't overly focus on single elements. Look to the overall balance and character of the beer for your final opinion.

When a style guideline calls for required information from the brewer, but this information has not been provided to you, please request it from the competition organizer. If the organizer does not have the information, then make a quick evaluation and decide how you wish to categorize the entry. Make note of it on your score sheet and then judge it as such. It may not always be accurate, but it's the best you can do under the circumstances. Do not overly penalize the brewer for missing information; it might not be their fault. Do the best you can and use common sense.

When you come across a beer that is clearly out of style, check with the stewards to make sure the entry has been properly labelled and/or categorized. Handling errors do occur.

Belgian Beerfest Style Guidelines

The following categories and styles comprise the Belgian Beerfest Guidelines which use the BJCP 2021 Style Guide and the 2008 Style Guide in the case of Cat 6. Beers are to be judged against the Style Guides in this document. For this reason, brewers must specify one of the listed styles for each entry. The organizers reserve the right to reclassify non-conforming entries to a listed style.

Note: Beers will be judged at appropriate serving temperatures, typically 8–12° C for ales and 5–7° C for lagers.

1 LIGHT COLOURED ALES

- 1.1 Belgian Single
- 1.2 Belgian Blonde Ale
- 1.3 Belgian Golden Strong Ale
- 1.4 Tripel

2 DARK COLOURED ALES

- 2.1 Dubbel
- 2.2 Bier de Garde (Specify, Blond, Amber, Brown)
- 2.3 Belgian Dark Strong Ale

3 SUMMER ALES

- 3.1 Witbier
- 3.2 Pale Ale
- 3.3 Belgian IPA

4 SAISON

- 4.1 Saison (Specify colour: Pale/Dark. Specify strength: Table/Standard/Super)

5 WILD BEERS

- 5.1 Straight Lambic
- 5.2 Flanders Brown Ale/Oud Bruin
- 5.3 Gueuze
- 5.4 Flanders Red Ale
- 5.5 Fruit Lambic

6 BELGIAN SPECIALITY

- 6.1 Belgian Speciality (specify type)

1. BELGIAN LIGHT COLOURED ALES

1.1 Belgian Single

Overall Impression: A blond, bitter, hoppy table beer that is very dry and highly carbonated. The aggressive fruity-spicy Belgian yeast character and high bitterness is forward in the balance, with a soft, supportive grainy-sweet malt palate, and a spicy-floral hop profile.

Aroma: Medium-low to medium-high Belgian yeast character, showing a fruity-spicy character along with medium-low to medium spicy or floral hops, rarely enhanced by light herbal or citrusy spice additions. Low to medium-low malt backdrop, with bready, crackery, grainy, or light honey notes. Fruit expression can vary widely (apple, pear, grapefruit, lemon, orange, peach, apricot). Phenols are typically like black pepper or clove. Bubblegum inappropriate.

Appearance: Pale yellow to medium gold color. Generally good clarity, with a moderate-sized, persistent, billowy white head with characteristic lacing.

Flavour: Initial malty flavour is light and has a honeyed biscuit, bready, or cracker character. Grainy but soft malt palate, and a crisp, dry, hoppy-bitter finish. Moderate spicy or floral hop flavour on the palate. Moderate esters similar in character to aroma. Light to moderate spicy phenols as found in the aroma. Medium to high bitterness, accentuated by dryness. The yeast and hop character lasts into the aftertaste.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body. Smooth. Medium-high to high carbonation, can be somewhat prickly. Should not have noticeable alcohol warmth.

Comments: Often not labeled or available outside the monastery, or infrequently brewed. Might also be called monk's beer, Brother's beer, or simply a Blond (we don't use this term to avoid confusion with the very different Belgian Blond Ale style). Highly attenuated, generally 85% or more.

History: While monastic breweries have a tradition of brewing a lower-strength beer as a monk's daily ration (Westmalle began making theirs in 1922), the bitter, pale beer this style describes is a relatively modern invention reflecting current tastes. Westvleteren first brewed theirs in 1999, but it replaced older lower-gravity products.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pilsner malt. Belgian yeast. Continental hops.

Style Comparison: Like a top-fermented Belgian interpretation of a German Pils – pale, hoppy, and well-attenuated, but with a strong Belgian yeast character. Has less sweetness, higher attenuation, less character malt, and is more hop-centered than a Belgian Pale Ale. More like a much smaller, more highly-hopped Belgian Tripel (with its bitterness and dryness) than a smaller Belgian Blond Ale.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1044 - 1054	1004 - 1010	25 - 45	4.8 – 6.0%	3 - 5

Commercial Examples: Chimay Gold, La Trappe Puur, Russian River Redemption, St. Bernardus Extra 4, Westmalle Extra, Westvleteren Blond

1.2. Belgian Blond Ale

Overall Impression: A golden, moderately-strong Belgian ale with a pleasantly subtle citrusy-spicy yeast complexity, smooth malty palate, and dry, soft finish

Aroma: Light to moderate grainy-sweet, slightly toasty, or crackery malt. Subtle to moderate yeast profile featuring fruity-citrusy esters (like oranges or lemons), and background spicy-peppery phenols. Light earthy or spicy hop notes optional. Light perfumy alcohol and suggestions of a light malty sweetness can give a slight honey- or sugar-like character. Subtle yet complex.

Appearance: Deep yellow to deep gold color. Generally very clear. Large, dense, and creamy white to off-white head. Good head retention with Belgian lace.

Flavour: Similar to the aroma, with the light to moderate grainy-sweet malt flavour being perceived first. Faint, lightly caramelized sugar or honey-like sweetness on palate. Medium bitterness, with the malt slightly more prominent in the balance. Moderate to low yeast profile with orange or lemon esters, and slight spicy-peppery phenols. Can have a light perfumy character. Light hop flavour, can be spicy or earthy, complementing yeast. Finishes medium-dry to dry, smooth, and soft, with light alcohol and malt in the aftertaste.

Mouthfeel: Medium-high to high carbonation, can give mouth-filling bubbly sensation. Medium body. Light to moderate alcohol warmth, but smooth. Can be somewhat creamy.

Comments: Most commercial examples are in the 6.5 – 7% ABV range. Often has an almost lager-like character, which gives it a cleaner profile in comparison to many other Belgian styles. Flemish-speaking Belgians use the term *Blond*, while the French speakers spell it *Blonde*. Many monastic or artisanal Belgian beers are called *Blond* but those are not representative of this style.

History: Relatively recent development to further appeal to European Pils drinkers, becoming more popular as it is heavily marketed and widely distributed. Despite claims of links back to 1200, the beer style was created after World War II and first popularized by Leffe.

Characteristic Ingredients: Belgian Pils malt, aromatic malts, sugar or other adjuncts, Belgian Abbey-type yeast strains, continental hops. Spices are not traditionally used; if present, should be a background character only.

Style Comparison: Similar strength and balance as a Belgian Dubbel but gold in color and without the darker malt flavours. Similar character as a Belgian Strong Golden Ale or Belgian Tripel, although a bit maltier, not as bitter, and lower in alcohol.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1062 - 1075	1008 - 1018	15 - 30	6.0 - 7.5%	4 - 6

Commercial Examples: Affligem Blond, Corsendonk Blond, Grimbergen Blonde, La Trappe Blond, Leffe Blond, Val-Dieu Blonde

1.3 Belgian Golden Strong Ale

Overall Impression: A very pale, highly attenuated, strong Belgian ale that is more fruity and hoppy than spicy. Complex and delicate, the dry finish, light body, and high carbonation accentuate the yeast and hop character. Sparkling carbonation and effervescent, forming a rocky white head.

Aroma: A complex bouquet of fruity esters, herbal hops, and peppery alcohol over a nearly neutral malt base. The esters are moderate to high, often pome fruit, especially pear. Hops are herbal, floral, or spicy, low to moderate. Alcohol and phenols often have a peppery or perfumy quality, low to moderate. Alcohol perception should be soft, not hot or solventy. Nearly neutral malt, possibly slightly grainy-sweet.

Appearance: Pale yellow to gold in color. Good clarity. Effervescent. Massive, long-lasting, rocky, white head resulting in characteristic Belgian lace on the glass as it fades.

Flavour: Flavour profile similar to aroma (same descriptors and intensities apply) for esters, hops, malt, phenols, and alcohol. The pear-like esters, peppery alcohol, herbal hops, and soft malt flavours carry through the palate into the long, dry finish and aftertaste. Medium to high bitterness, accentuated by the dry finish and high carbonation, lasts into the aftertaste.

Mouthfeel: Very highly carbonated. Effervescent. Light to medium body, lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest. Carbonation accentuates the perception of lightness. Smooth but noticeable alcohol warmth, not hot or solventy.

Comments: References to the devil are included in the names of many commercial examples of this style, referring to their potent alcoholic strength and as a tribute to the original example (Duvel). Traditionally bottle-conditioned.

History: Developed by the Moortgat brewery after WWI as a response to the growing popularity of Pilsner beers. Originally a darker beer, it achieved its modern form by the 1970s.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pilsner malt with substantial sugary adjuncts. Continental hops. Fruity Belgian yeast. Fairly soft water. Spicing not traditional.

Style Comparison: Often confused with Belgian Tripel, but is usually paler, lighter-bodied, crisper, and drier. Tends to use yeast that favor ester development (particularly pome fruit) over spiciness in the balance, and has more of a late hop character.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1070-1095	1005-1016	22 - 35	7.5-10.5%	3 - 6

Commercial Examples: Brigand, Delirium Tremens, Duvel, Judas, Lucifer, Russian River Damnation

1.4 Belgian Tripel

Overall Impression: A strong, pale, somewhat spicy Belgian ale with a pleasant rounded malt flavour, firm bitterness, and dry finish. Quite aromatic, with spicy, fruity, and light alcohol notes combining with the supportive clean malt character to produce a surprisingly drinkable beverage considering the high alcohol content.

Aroma: Complex but seamless bouquet of moderate to significant spiciness, moderate fruity esters, low alcohol, low hops, and light malt. Generous spicy, peppery, sometimes clove-like phenols. Esters often reminiscent of citrus fruit, like oranges or lemons, but may sometimes have a slight ripe banana character. A low yet distinctive spicy, floral, sometimes perfumy hop character is optional. Alcohols are soft, spicy, and low in intensity. The malt character is light, with a soft, slightly grainy-sweet, or slightly honey-like impression.

Appearance: Deep yellow to pale amber in color. Good clarity. Effervescent. Long-lasting, creamy, rocky, white head resulting in characteristic Belgian lace on the glass as it fades.

Flavour: Flavour profile similar to aroma (same descriptors apply) for malt, esters, phenols, alcohol, and hops. Esters low to moderate, phenols low to moderate, hops low to moderate, alcohol low, all well combined in a coherent presentation. Medium to high bitterness, accentuated by a dry finish. Moderate bitterness in the aftertaste with substantial spicy-fruity yeast character. Should not be sweet.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body, although lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest. Highly carbonated. The alcohol content is deceptive, and has little to no obvious warming sensation. Effervescent. Should not be heavy.

Comments: High in alcohol but does not taste strongly of alcohol. The best examples are sneaky, not obvious. High carbonation and attenuation helps bring out the many flavours and to increase the perception of a dry finish. Most traditional versions have at least 30 IBUs and are very dry.

History: Popularized by the monastery at Westmalle, first brewed in 1934.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pilsner malt, often pale sugar adjuncts. Continental hops. Spicy-fruity Belgian yeast strains. Spice additions are generally not traditional, and if used, should be a background character only. Fairly soft water.

Style Comparison: May resemble a Belgian Golden Strong Ale but slightly darker and a bit fuller-bodied, with more emphasis on phenols and less on esters, and fewer late hops. Should not seem like a blond Barleywine.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1075-1085	1008-1014	20 - 40	7.5-9.5%	4.5 – 7.0

Commercial Examples: Chimay Tripel, La Rulles Tripel, La Trappe Tripel, St. Bernardus Tripel, Val-Dieu Triple, Westmalle Tripel

2. BELGIAN DARK COLOURED ALES

2.1 Belgian Dubbel

Overall Impression: A deep reddish-copper, moderately strong, malty, complex Belgian ale with rich malty flavours, dark or dried fruit esters, and light alcohol blended together in a malty presentation that still finishes fairly dry.

Aroma: Moderate to moderately strong, rich malty aroma, with hints of chocolate, caramelized sugar, or toast. Never roasted or burnt. Moderate fruity esters, often dark or dried fruit, especially raisins and plums, sometimes pome fruit or banana. Low to moderate spicy, peppery phenols. Hops typically absent, but can have a low spicy, herbal, or floral character. The malt is strongest in the balance, with esters and spice adding complexity. Low soft, perfumy alcohol optional.

Appearance: Dark amber to copper in color, with an attractive reddish depth of color. Generally clear. Large, dense, and long-lasting creamy off-white head.

Flavour: Flavour profile similar to aroma (same descriptors and intensities apply) for malt, esters, phenols, alcohol, and hops. Medium-low to medium bitterness, but malt is always most prominent in the balance. The esters and phenols add complexity and interest to the malt, alcohol not typically tasted. Malty-rich, sometimes sweet flavour, that finishes moderately dry with a malty aftertaste accented by yeast esters and phenols.

Mouthfeel: Smooth, medium to medium-full body. Medium-high carbonation, which can influence the perception of body. Low alcohol warmth optional, never hot or solventy.

Comments: Most commercial examples are in the 6.5 – 7% ABV range. Can taste somewhat sweet due to restrained bitterness, but the beers are actually fairly dry.

History: While dark and strong beers were produced long before, modern Dubbel traces back to the double brown or strong beer first produced at Westmalle in 1922 when the brewery was re-established after World War I. Other examples date from post-World War II.

Characteristic Ingredients: Spicy-estery Belgian yeast. Impression of a complex grain bill, although many traditional versions are quite simple, with caramelized sugar syrup or unrefined sugars and yeast providing much of the complexity. Continental hops. Spices not typical; if present, should be subtle.

Style Comparison: Perhaps similar to a Dunkles Bock but with a Belgian yeast and sugar character. Similar in strength and balance to a Belgian Blond Ale, but with a richer malt and ester profile. Less strong and intense than a Belgian Dark Strong Ale.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1062-1075	1008-1018	15-25	6.0 - 7.6%	10 - 17

Commercial Examples: Chimay Red, Corsendonk Bruin, La Trappe Dubbel, Rochefort 6, St. Bernardus Pater 6, Westmalle Dubbel

2.2 Bière de Garde

Three main variations are included in the style: the **blond** (blonde), the **brown** (brune), and the most traditional **amber** (ambrée).

Overall Impression: A family of smooth, fairly strong, malty, lagered artisanal French beer with a range of malt flavours appropriate for the blond, amber, or brown color. All are malty yet dry, with clean flavours. Darker versions have more malt character, while paler versions can have more hops while still remaining malt-focused beers.

Aroma: Prominent malty richness, often with a complex, light-to-moderate intensity, toasty and bready character. Low to moderate esters. Low spicy, peppery, or herbal hops optional. Generally quite clean, although stronger versions may have a light, spicy alcohol note as it warms.

Paler versions are still malty but lack richer, deeper aromatics and may have a bit more hops.

Appearance: Blond, amber, and brown variations exist, with the color varying accordingly: golden-blond to reddish-bronze to chestnut brown. Clarity is brilliant to fair, but some haze is allowable. Well-formed head, generally white to off-white (varying with beer color), average persistence.

Flavour: Medium to high malty richness, often with a toasty, biscuity, toffee, or light caramel character. Low to moderate esters and alcohol flavours. Medium-low hop bitterness, giving a malty balance to the palate and aftertaste. Medium-dry to dry finish, not sweet, cloying, or heavy. Low spicy, peppery, or herbal hop flavour optional.

Malt flavour, depth, richness, intensity, and complexity increases with beer color. Darker versions will have more of an initial rich malty impression than paler versions but should not seem roasted. Paler versions can have slightly greater hop flavour.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-light body, often with a smooth, creamy-silky character. Moderate to high carbonation. Moderate alcohol warming, but should never be hot.

Comments: *Cellar, musty, moldy, or rustic* character often mentioned in literature are signs of mishandled imports, not fresh, authentic products. Age and oxidation can also increase fruitiness and caramel flavours, but increase harshness. While caramel and fruit can be part of the style, do not confuse the oxidation character for the proper base beer.

History: Name roughly means *beer for keeping*. A traditional farmhouse artisanal ale from the area around Lille in Northern France, historically brewed in early spring and kept in cold cellars for consumption in warmer weather. Although documented to exist in the 1800s, Jenlain is the prototypical modern amber lager version first bottled in the 1940s.

Characteristic Ingredients: Base malts vary by beer color, but usually include pale, Vienna, and Munich types. Crystal-type malts of varying color. Sugar adjuncts may be used. Lager or ale yeast fermented at cool ale temperatures, followed by long cold conditioning. Continental hops.

Style Comparison: Calling this a farmhouse beer invites comparisons to Saison, which has a completely different balance – Bière de Garde is malty and smooth, while Saison is hoppy and bitter. Actually has more of a similarity in malt profile to a Bock.

Entry Instructions: Entrant **must** specify *blond, amber, or brown* Bière de Garde. If no color is specified, the judge should attempt to judge based on initial observation, expecting a malt flavour and balance that matches the color.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1060-1080	1008-1016	18-28	6.0 -8.5%	6 - 19

Commercial Examples: Ch'Ti Blonde, Jenlain Ambrée, La Choulette Brune, Russian River Perdition, Saint Sylvestre 3 Monts Blonde, Two Brothers Domaine Dupage

2.3 Belgian Dark Strong Ale

Overall Impression: A dark, complex, very strong Belgian ale with a delicious blend of malt richness, dark fruit flavours, and spicy notes. Complex, rich, smooth, and dangerous.

Aroma: A complex and fairly intense mix of rich maltiness and deep fruit, accentuated by spicy phenols and alcohol. The malt character is moderately-high to high and has a deep, bread-toasty base with dark caramel notes, but no impression of dark or roasted malt. Esters are strong to moderately low, and reminiscent of raisins, plums, dried cherries, figs, dates, or prunes. Spicy phenols like black pepper or vanilla, not clove, may be present as a low to moderate background character. A soft, spicy, perfumy, or rose-like alcohol is low to moderate, but never hot or solvent-like. Hops are usually not noticeable, but if present can add a light spicy, floral, or herbal character.

Appearance: Deep amber to deep coppery-brown in color (*dark* in the style name implies *more deeply colored than golden*, not *black*). Huge, dense, moussy, persistent cream- to light tan-colored head. Usually clear.

Flavour: Rich and complex maltiness, but not heavy in the finish. The flavour character is similar to the aroma (same malt, ester, phenol, alcohol, and hop comments apply here as well). Moderately malty-rich on the palate, which can have a sweet impression if bitterness is low. Usually moderately dry to dry finish, although may be up to moderately sweet. Medium-low to moderate bitterness; alcohol provides some of the balance to the malt. Generally malty-rich balance, but can be fairly even with bitterness. The complex and varied flavours should blend smoothly and harmoniously, and often benefit from age. The finish should not be heavy or syrupy.

Mouthfeel: High carbonation but not sharp. Smooth but noticeable alcohol warmth. Body can range from medium-light to medium-full and creamy. Most are medium-bodied.

Comments: Also known as a Belgian Quad, mainly outside of Belgium (Quadruple is the name of a specific beer). Has a wider range of interpretation than many other Belgian styles. Traditional versions tend to be drier than many modern commercial versions, which can be rather sweet and full-bodied. Many examples are simply known by their strength or color designation. Some might be labeled Grand Cru, but this is more of a statement of quality than style.

History: Westvleteren started making their version just before World War II, with Chimay and Rochefort adding their examples just after. Other monastic breweries created products towards the end of the 20th century, but some secular breweries began producing similar beers starting around 1960.

Characteristic Ingredients: Spicy-estery Belgian yeast. Impression of a complex grain bill, although many traditional versions are quite simple, with caramelized sugar syrup or unrefined sugars and yeast providing much of the complexity. Continental hops. Spices not typical; if present, should be subtle.

Style Comparison: Like a larger Belgian Dubbel, with a fuller body and increased malt richness. Not as bitter or hoppy as a Belgian Tripel, but of similar strength.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1075 - 1110	1010 - 1024	20 - 35	8 - 12%	12 - 22

Commercial Examples: Achel Extra Bruin, Boulevard The Sixth Glass, Chimay Blue, Rochefort 10, St. Bernardus Abt 12, Westvleteren 12

3. SUMMER ALES

3.1 Witbier

Overall Impression: A pale, hazy Belgian wheat beer with spices accentuating the yeast character. A delicate, lightly spiced, moderate-strength ale that is a refreshing summer drink with its high carbonation, dry finish, and light hopping.

Aroma: Moderate bready maltiness, often with light notes of honey or vanilla. Light grainy, spicy wheat aromatics. Moderate perfumy-lemony 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 typically absent. Spices should blend in with fruity, floral, and sweet aromas and should not be overly strong.

Appearance: Very pale straw to deep yellow in color. The beer will be very cloudy from starch haze or yeast, which gives it a milky, whitish-yellow shine. Dense, white, moussy head. Head retention should be quite good.

Flavour: Pleasant bready, grainy malt flavour, often with a honey or vanilla character. Moderate zesty, orange-citrusy fruitiness. Herbal-spicy flavours, which may include lemony coriander and other spices, are common should be subtle and balanced, not overpowering. A spicy-earthy hop flavour can be low to none, and never overshadows the spices. Hop bitterness is low to medium-low, and supports the refreshing flavours of fruit and spice. Refreshingly crisp with a dry finish, and no bitter or harsh aftertaste.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body, often having a smoothness and light creaminess. Effervescent character from high carbonation. Refreshing, from carbonation, dryness, and lack of bitterness in finish. No harshness or astringency. Should not be overly dry and thin, nor should it be thick and heavy.

Comments: Historical versions may have had some lactic sourness but this is absent in fresh modern versions. Spicing has some variety, but should not be overdone. Coriander of certain origin or age might give an inappropriate ham or celery character. The beer tends to be perishable, so younger, fresher, properly-handled examples are most desirable. An impression of sweetness is often due to low bitterness, not residual sugar. Most examples seem to be approximately 5% ABV.

History: One of a group of medieval Belgian white beers from the Leuven area, it died out in 1957 and was later revived in 1966 by Pierre Celis at what became Hoegaarden. After Hoegaarden was acquired by Interbrew, the style grew rapidly and inspired many similar products that are traceable to the Celis recreation of the style, not those from past centuries.

Characteristic Ingredients: Unmalted wheat (30-60%), the remainder low color barley malt. Some versions use up to 5-10% raw oats or other unmalted cereal grains. Traditionally uses coriander seed and dried Curaçao orange peel. Other secret spices are rumored to be used in some versions, as are sweet orange peels. Mild fruity-spicy Belgian ale yeast.

Style Comparison: Low bitterness level with a balance similar to a Weissbier, but with spice and citrus character coming from additions more so than the yeast.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1044 - 1052	1008 - 1012	8 - 20	4.5 - 5.5%	2 - 4

Commercial Examples: Allagash White, Blanche de Bruxelles, Celis White, Hoegaarden White, Ommegang Witte, St. Bernardus Wit

3.2 Belgian Pale Ale

Overall Impression: A top-fermented, all malt, average strength Belgian ale that is moderately bitter, not dry-hopped, and without strong flavours. The copper-colored beer lacks the aggressive yeast character or sourness of many Belgian beers, but has a well-balanced, malty, fruity, and often bready and toasty profile.

Aroma: Moderate bready malt aroma, which can include toasty, biscuity, or nutty notes, possibly with a touch of light caramel or honey. Moderate to moderately high fruitiness complements the malt, and is suggestive of pear, orange, apple, or lemon, and sometimes of darker stone fruit like plums. Low to moderate spicy, herbal, or floral hop character. Low peppery, spicy phenols optional. The hop character is lower in balance than the malt and fruitiness.

Appearance: Amber to copper in color. Clarity is very good. Creamy, rocky, white head. Well carbonated.

Flavour: Has an initial soft, smooth, moderately malty flavour with a variable profile of toasty, biscuity, nutty, light caramel, or honey notes. Moderate to moderately high fruitiness, with a pear, orange, apple, or lemon character. Medium-low to low spicy, herbal, or floral hop character. Medium-high to medium-low bitterness, enhanced by optional low to very low peppery phenols. Dry to balanced finish, with hops becoming more pronounced in the aftertaste of those with a drier finish. Fairly well balanced overall, with no single component being high in intensity; malt and fruitiness are more forward initially with a supportive bitterness and drying character coming on late.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-light body. Smooth palate. Alcohol level is restrained, and any warming character should be low if present. Medium to medium-high carbonation.

Comments: Most commonly found in the Flemish provinces of Antwerp, Brabant, Hainaut, and East Flanders. A *Spéciale Belge Ale* (Belgian Special Ale) in Belgium.

History: Created after a competition in 1904 to create a regional specialty beer to compete with imported British ales and continental lagers. De Koninck of Antwerp is the best-known modern example, making the beer since 1913.

Characteristic Ingredients: Variable grist with pale, character, and caramel malts. No adjuncts. English or continental hops. Fruity yeast with low phenols.

Style Comparison: Fairly similar to pale ales from England (11C Strong Bitter), typically with a slightly different yeast character and a more varied malt profile. Less yeast character than many other Belgian beers, though.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1048 - 1054	1010 - 1014	20 - 30	4.8 - 5.5%	8 - 14

Commercial Examples: De Koninck Bolleke, De Ryck Special, Palm, Palm Doble

3.3 Belgian IPA

Overall Impression: A dry, hoppy IPA with fruitiness and spiciness of Belgian yeast. Often lighter in color and more attenuated, similar to a Belgian Tripel that has been brewed with more hops.

Aroma: Moderate to high hop aroma, often reflecting the character of American or New World hops (tropical, melon, stone fruit, citrus, piney, etc.) or Continental hops (spicy, herbal, floral, etc.), possibly with a light dry-hop note. Gentle malt sweetness, sometimes with a sugary or honey character, but rarely caramel. Moderate to high esters, often pears, apples, citrus, or banana. Light spice, clove or pepper, optional. Light alcohol aroma optional.

Appearance: Light golden to amber in color. Moderate to large off-white head with good retention. Good to quite hazy clarity.

Flavour: Moderate fruity and spicy flavours, same descriptors as aroma. Moderate to high hop flavour, same descriptors as aroma. Light, relatively neutral grainy malt flavour, optionally with low toast, caramel, or honey. Moderate to high bitterness. Dry to medium-dry finish that often accentuates the perception of bitterness. Aftertaste has a lingering bitterness but is not harsh.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Medium to high carbonation level, which can lighten the impression of body. Light warmth optional.

Comments: The choice of yeast strain and hop varieties is critical since many choices will clash horribly.

History: A relatively modern style, dating from the mid-2000s. Homebrewers and craft breweries substituted Belgian yeast in their American IPA recipes. Belgian breweries typically added more hops to their stronger pale beers.

Characteristic Ingredients: Belgian yeast strains used in making Belgian Tripels and Golden Strong Ales. American examples tend to use American or New World hops while Belgian versions tend to use European hops and only pale malt. Sugar adjuncts common.

Style Comparison: A cross between an American IPA or Double IPA with a Belgian Golden Strong Ale or Belgian Tripel. This style is may be spicier, stronger, drier, and fruitier than an American IPA.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBU	ABV	SRM
1058 - 1080	1008 - 1016	50 - 100	6.2 – 9.5%	5 - 8

Commercial Examples: Brewery Vivant Triomphe, Green Flash Le Freak, Houblon Chouffe, Urthel Hop It

+ SAISON

4.1 Saison

Overall Impression: A family of refreshing, highly attenuated, hoppy, and fairly bitter Belgian ales with a very dry finish and high carbonation. Characterized by a fruity, spicy, sometimes phenolic fermentation profile and the use of cereal grains and sometimes spices for complexity. Several variations in strength and colour exist.

Aroma: A pleasantly aromatic mix of fruity-spicy yeast and hops. The fruity esters are moderate to high, and often have a citrus fruit, pome fruit, or stone fruit character. Low to moderately-high spicy notes are often like black pepper, not clove. Hops are low to moderate and have a continental character (spicy, floral, earthy, or fruity). The malt is often overshadowed, but if detected is lightly grainy. Spices and herbs optional, but must not dominate. Sourness optional (see *Comments*).

Strong versions have more aromatic intensity, and can add a light alcohol and moderate malt character. Table versions have less intensity and not have an alcohol character. Darker versions add malt character associated with darker grains.

Appearance: Pale gold to deep amber in color, sometimes pale orange. Long-lasting, dense, rocky white to ivory head. Belgian lace. Unfiltered, so clarity is variable (poor to good) and may be hazy. Effervescent. Darker versions can be copper to dark brown. Stronger versions may be a little deeper in color.

Flavour: A balance of fruity and spicy yeast, hoppy bitterness, and grainy malt with moderate to high bitterness, and a very dry finish. The fruity and spicy aspects are medium-low to medium-high, and hop flavour is low to medium, both with similar character as in the aroma (same descriptors apply). Malt is low to medium, with a soft, grainy palate. Very high attenuation, never with a sweet or heavy finish. Bitter, spicy aftertaste. Spices and herbs optional, but if used must be in harmony with the yeast. Sourness optional (see *Comments*).

Darker versions will have more malt character, including flavours from the darker malts. Stronger versions will have greater malt intensity, and a light alcohol note.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium-low body. Very high carbonation. Effervescent. Light warming alcohol optional. Sourness rare but optional (see *Comments*).

Stronger versions can have up to medium body and be somewhat warming. Table versions have no warmth.

Comments: This style generally describes the standard-strength pale version, followed by differences for variations in strength and color. Darker versions tend to have more malt character and less apparent hop bitterness, yielding a more balanced presentation. Stronger versions often have more malt flavour, richness, warmth, and body simply due to the higher gravity. There is no correlation between strength and color.

Sourness is totally optional, and if present at low to moderate levels, it may substitute somewhat for bitterness in the balance. A Saison should not be both sour and bitter at the same time. The high attenuation may make the beer seem more bitter than the IBUs suggest. Pale versions are often more bitter and hoppy than darker versions. Yeast selection often drives the balance of fruity and spicy notes, and can change the character significantly; allow for a range of interpretations.

Saison is often called Farmhouse Ale in the US, but this term is not common in Europe where they are simply part of a larger grouping of artisanal ales. *Brettanomyces* is not typical for this style; Saisons with Brett should be entered in the *Belgium Speciality Ale Category 6*.

History: A provision ale from Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium. Originally a lower-alcohol product so as to not debilitate farm and field workers, but tavern-strength products also existed. The best known modern saison, Saison Dupont, was first produced in the 1920s. Dupont's super saison was first produced in 1954, and its

brown version in the mid-1980s. Fantôme began producing its ‘seasonal’ saisons in 1988. While the style retains its rustic image, they are now mostly made in large breweries.

Grisette is a well-known type of Saison popularised by miners in the Hainuit province during the 1800’s. Typically lower in alcohol, less tart and with a light hop character, Grisette was dry and refreshing.

Enter Grisette as Saison, Table Strength. Comment: Grisette with wheat as the character grain.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pale base malt. Cereal grains, such as wheat, oats, spelt, or rye. May contain sugary adjuncts. Continental hops. Spicy-fruity Belgian Saison yeast. Spices and herbs are uncommon, but allowable if they don’t dominate.

Style Comparison: The pale, standard strength version is like a more highly-attenuated, hoppy, and bitter Belgian Blond Ale with a stronger yeast character. At super strength and pale color, similar to a Belgian Tripel, but often with more of a grainy, rustic quality and sometimes with a spicier yeast character.

Entry Instructions: The entrant **must** specify the *strength* (table, standard, super) and the *color* (pale, dark). The entrant **may** identify character grains used.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1048 - 1065 <i>standard</i>	1002 - 1008 <i>standard</i>	20 - 35	3.5 - 5% <i>table</i> 5.0 – 7.0% <i>standard</i> 7.0 – 9.5% <i>super</i>	5 -14 <i>pale</i> 15 – 22 <i>dark</i>

Commercial Examples: Ellezelloise Saison 2000, Lefebvre Saison 1900, Saison Dupont, Saison de Pipaix, Saison Voisin, Boulevard Tank 7

5. WILD BEERS

5.1 Unblended Lambic

Overall Impression: A fairly sour, often moderately funky, wild Belgian wheat beer with sourness taking the place of hop bitterness in the balance. Traditionally served uncarbonated as a café drink.

Aroma: Young versions can be quite sour and fruity, but can develop barnyard, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, or horse blanket funkiness with age. The fruit character can take on a light citrus fruit, citrus rind, pome fruit, or rhubarb quality, getting more complex with age. Malt can have a light bready, grainy, honey, or wheat-like quality, if noticeable. Should not have enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy faults. No hops.

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. White colored head generally has poor retention.

Flavour: Young versions often have a strong lactic sourness with fruity flavours (same descriptors as aroma), while aged versions are more balanced and complex. Funky notes can develop over time, same descriptors as aroma. Low bready, grainy malt. Bitterness generally below sensory threshold; sourness provides the balance. No hop flavour. Dry finish, increasing with age. Should not have enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy faults.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium-light body; should not be watery. Has a medium to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Traditional versions are virtually to completely uncarbonated, but bottled examples can pick up moderate carbonation with age.

Comments: A single-batch, unblended beer, reflecting the house character of the brewery. Generally served young (6 months) from the cask. Younger versions tend to be one-dimensionally sour since a complex Brett character takes a year or more to develop. A noticeable vinegary or cidery character is considered a fault by Belgian brewers. Typically bottled only when completely fermented. Lambic sweetened with raw sugar at service time is known as *Faro*.

History: Spontaneously-fermented ‘wild’ ales from the area in and around Brussels (also known as the Senne Valley and the Pajottenland) stem from a farmhouse brewing tradition several centuries old.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pilsner malt, unmalted wheat. Aged hops (3+ years) used more as a preservative than for bitterness. Spontaneously fermented with naturally occurring yeast and bacteria in well-used, neutral oak barrels.

Style Comparison: Often has a simpler sourness and less complexity than a Gueuze, but more variability from batch to batch. Traditionally served uncarbonated from pitchers, while Gueuze is bottled and very highly carbonated.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1040 - 1054	1001 - 1010	0 - 10	5.0 - 6.5%	3 - 6

Commercial Examples: Cantillon Grand Cru Bruocsella. In the Brussels area, many specialty cafés have draught lambic from Boon, De Cam, Cantillon, Drie Fonteinen, Lindemans, Timmermans, Girardin and others.

5.2 Flanders Brown Ale / Oud Bruin

Overall Impression: A malty, fruity, aged, somewhat sour Belgian-style brown ale with a caramel-chocolate malt flavour, and often substantial alcohol.

Aroma: Richly malty with fruity esters and an aged sourness. Medium to medium-high esters commonly reminiscent of raisins, plums, figs, dates, oranges, black cherries, or prunes. Medium-low to medium-high malt with caramel, toffee, treacle, or chocolate character. Low spicy-peppery phenols optional. A low sour aroma may be present, and can modestly increase with age but should not grow to a strongly acetic, vinegary character. Hop aroma absent. Aged examples can show a lightly nutty, sherry-like oxidation character.

Appearance: Dark reddish-brown to brown in color. Good clarity. Average to good head retention. Ivory to light tan head color.

Flavour: Malty with fruity complexity and typically some dark caramel or burnt sugar flavour. Medium-low to medium-high malt, same descriptors as aroma. Medium to medium-high fruitiness, same descriptors as aroma. Low spicy-peppery phenols optional. A slight sourness often becomes more pronounced in well-aged examples, along with some sherry-like character, producing a “sweet-and-sour” profile and aftertaste. The sourness should not grow to a strongly acetic, vinegary character. Hop flavour absent. Restrained hop bitterness. Balance is malty, but with fruitiness and sourness present. Blending and sweetening may produce a range of finishes, and balances.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-full body. Low to moderate carbonation. No astringency. Stronger versions can be noticeably warming.

Comments: Long aging and blending of young and aged beer may occur, adding smoothness and complexity and balancing any harsh, sour character. Traditionally, this style was designed to lay down so examples with a moderate aged character are considered superior to younger examples.

Fruited versions should be entered in *Category 6 Belgian Speciality*.

History: An indigenous beer of East Flanders, typified by the products of the Liefman brewery with roots back to the 1600s. Belgian brewers consider Flanders Red and Oud Bruin to be of the same style family, but the distinction was first made when Michael Jackson first defined beer styles, since the flavour profiles are distinctly different. Many modern examples are influenced by the popularity of Liefmans Goudenband. Unrelated to the dark, sweet Dutch lager of the same name.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pils malt, dark crystal malts, maize, small amounts of color malt. Low alpha acid continental hops. Saccharomyces and Lactobacillus fermented. Aged. Water with carbonates and magnesium typical of its home region.

Style Comparison: A deeper malt character with more caramel, toffee, and chocolate flavours and darker color distinguishes these beers from Flanders Red Ale. The Oud Bruin is less acetic and maltier than a Flanders Red, and the fruity flavours are more malt-oriented. In modern times, Oud Bruin also tends to be higher in alcohol than is typically seen in Flanders Red Ales. Oud Bruin differs from Lambic in that it is not spontaneously fermented.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1040 - 1074	1008 - 1012	20 - 25	4 - 8%	17 - 22

Commercial Examples: Ichtegem Oud Bruin, Liefmans Goudenband, Liefmans Oud Bruin, Petrus Roodbruin, Friem Oud Bruin, VanderGhinste Roodbruin

5.3 Gueuze

Overall Impression: A very refreshing, highly carbonated, pleasantly sour but balanced wild Belgian wheat beer. The wild beer character can be complex and varied, combining sour, funky, and fruity flavours.

Aroma: Moderately sour with complex but balanced funkiness accented by fruity notes. The funkiness can be moderate to strong, and can be described as barnyard, leather, earthy, goaty, hay, horsey, or horse blanket. Fruitiness is light to moderate, with a citrus fruit, citrus rind, pome fruit, or rhubarb quality. Malt is supportive, and can be lightly bready, grainy, honey, or wheat-like, if noticeable. Should not have enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy faults. No hops. Light oak acceptable. Complexity of aroma is valued more than intensity, but a balanced sour presentation is desirable.

Appearance: Golden color, with excellent clarity and a thick, rocky, mousse-like, white head that seems to last forever. Effervescent.

Flavour: Sour and funky on the palate, with a similar character as the aroma (same descriptors and intensities apply for funk and fruit). Low bready, grainy malt. Bitterness low to none; sourness provides most of the balance. No hop flavour. Crisp, dry finish, with a tart and funky aftertaste. Light oak, vanilla, and honey are acceptable. Should not have enteric, smoky, cigar-like, or cheesy faults. The beer should not be one dimensionally sour; a balanced, moderately sour presentation is classic, with the funky and fruity notes providing complexity. May be aged.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium-light body; should not be watery. Has a low to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Some versions have a very light warming character. Highly carbonated.

Comments: Blending young and aged lambic creates a more complex product, and often reflects the personal taste of the blender. A noticeable vinegary or cidery character is considered a fault by Belgian brewers. A good Gueuze is not the most pungent, but possesses a full and tantalizing bouquet, a sharp aroma, and a soft, velvety texture. Lambic is served uncarbonated, while Gueuze is served sparkling. Products marked *oude* or *vieille* (“old”) are considered most traditional.

History: Same basic history as Lambic, but involves blending, which may be performed outside the brewery. Some of the best examples are produced by blenders, who ferment, age, blend, and package the final product. Some modern producers are sweetening their products post-fermentation to make them more palatable to a wider audience. These guidelines describe the traditional dry product.

Characteristic Ingredients: Same as Lambic, except that one-, two-, and three-year old Lambics are blended, then cellared.

Style Comparison: More complex and carbonated than a Lambic. The sourness isn’t necessarily stronger, but it tends to have more of a well-developed wild character.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1040 - 1054	1000 - 1006	0 - 10	5 - 8%	5 - 6

Commercial Examples: 3 Fonteinen Oud Gueuze, Cantillon Classic Gueuze 100% Lambic, Girardin Gueuze 1882 (Black label), Hanssens Oude Gueuze, Lindemans Gueuze Cuvée René, Oude Gueuze Boon

5.4 Flanders Red Ale

Overall Impression: A sour and fruity oak-aged reddish-brown Belgian-style ale with supportive toasty malt flavours and fruit complexity. The dry, tannic finish supports the suggestion of a vintage red wine.

Aroma: Complex fruity-sour profile with supporting malt. Fruitiness is high, and reminiscent of black cherries, oranges, plums, red currants, or fruit leather. Low to medium-low vanilla, chocolate, or peppery phenol can be present for complexity. The sour aroma ranges from moderate to high. A dominant vinegary character is inappropriate, although low to moderate levels of acetic acid are acceptable if balanced with the malt. No hop aroma.

Appearance: Deep red, burgundy to reddish-brown in color. Good clarity. White to very pale tan head. Average to good head retention.

Flavour: Moderate to moderately-high malty flavours often have a soft toasty-rich quality. Intense fruit flavours, same descriptors as aroma. Complex, moderate to high sourness, accentuated by the esters; should not be a simple lactic sourness. A dominant vinegary character is inappropriate, although low to moderate acetic acid is acceptable if balanced with the malt. Generally as the sour character increases, the malt character fades to more of a background flavour (and vice versa). Low to medium-low vanilla, chocolate, or peppery phenols optional. No hop flavour. Restrained bitterness; balanced to the malt side. Acids and tannins can enhance the perception of bitterness, and provide balance and structure. Some versions are sweetened, or blended to be sweet; allow for a wide range of sweetness levels, which can soften the acidic bite and acetic perception.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, often enhanced by tannins. Low to medium carbonation. Low to medium astringency, often with a prickly acidity. Deceptively light and crisp on the palate although a somewhat sweet finish is not uncommon.

Comments: The “wine-like” observation should not be taken too literally; it may suggest a high-acid French Burgundy to some, but it is clearly not identical. Produced by long aging (up to two years) in large wooden vats (foeders), blending of young and well-aged beer, and variable amounts of sweetening of the final product. A wide range of products are possible depending on the actual blend and whether any sweetening takes place. Acetic flavours may be noted, but not all acidity in this beer is from acetic acid; vinegar is over six times greater in total acidity than this style. *Fruited versions should be entered as a Belgian Speciality – Cat 6.*

History: An indigenous beer of West Flanders, typified by the products of the Rodenbach brewery, established in 1821. Aging in wooden vats and blending of old and young beers borrowed from the English tradition. Belgian brewers consider Flanders Red and Oud Bruin to be of the same style family, but the distinction was first made when Michael Jackson first defined beer styles, since the flavour profiles are distinctly different. Many modern examples are influenced by the popularity of Rodenbach Grand Cru.

Characteristic Ingredients: Vienna or Munich malts, a variety of caramel malts, maize. Low alpha acid continental hops. Sacch, Lacto, and Brett. Aged in oak. Sometimes blended and sweetened (natural or artificial).

Style Comparison: Less malty-rich than an Oud Bruin, often with more of a fruity-tart and acetic profile.

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1048 - 1057	1002 - 1012	10 - 25	4.6 - 6.5%	10 - 17

Commercial Examples: Cuvée des Jacobins, Duchesse de Bourgogne, New Belgium La Folie, Rodenbach Classic, Rodenbach Grand Cru, Vichtenaar Flemish Ale

5.5 Fruit Lambic

Overall Impression: A complex, refreshing, pleasantly sour Belgian wheat beer blending a complementary fermented fruit character with a sour, funky Gueuze.

Aroma: The specified fruit should be the dominant aroma, blending well with similar aromatics as Gueuze (same description applies, but with the addition of a fermented fruit character).

Appearance: Like Gueuze, but modified by the color of the fruit used, fading in intensity with age. Clarity is often good, although some fruit will not drop bright. If highly carbonated in the traditional manner, will have a thick rocky, generally long-lasting, mousse-like head, sometimes with a hue reflecting the added fruit.

Flavour: Combines the flavour profile of a Gueuze (same description applies) with noticeable flavour contributions from the added fruit. Traditional versions are dry and tart, with an added fermented fruit flavour. Modern versions may have a variable sweetness, which can offset the acidity. Fruit flavours also fade with age, and lose their vibrancy, so can be low to high in intensity.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium-light body; should not be watery. Has a low to high tart, puckering quality without being sharply astringent. Some versions have a light warming character. Carbonation can vary from sparkling to nearly still.

Comments: Produced like Gueuze, with the fruit commonly added halfway through aging, so the yeast and bacteria can ferment all sugars from the fruit; or less commonly by adding fruit to a Lambic. The variety of fruit can sometimes be hard to identify since fermented and aged fruit is often perceived differently than the more recognizable fresh fruit. Fruit can bring acidity and tannins, in addition to flavour and aroma; understanding the fermented character of added fruit helps with judging the style.

History: Same basic history as Gueuze, including the recent sweetening trend but with fruit in addition to sugar. Fruit was traditionally added by the blender or publican to increase the variety of beers available in local cafés.

Characteristic Ingredients: Same base as Gueuze. Fruit added to barrels during fermentation and blending. Traditional fruit include tart cherries, raspberries; modern fruit include peaches, apricots, grapes, and others. May use natural or artificial sweeteners.

Style Comparison: A Gueuze with fruit, not just a sour Fruit Beer; the wild character must be evident.

Entry Instructions: The *type of fruit* used **must** be specified. The brewer **must** declare a *carbonation* level (low, medium, high) and a *sweetness* level (low/none, medium, high).

Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	IBUs	ABV	SRM
1040 - 1060	1000 - 1010	0 - 10	5 - 7%	3 - 7

Commercial Examples: 3 Fonteinen Schaerbeekse Kriek, Cantillon Fou' Foune, Cantillon Lou Pepe Framboise, Cantillon Vigneronne, Hanssens Oude Kriek, Oude Kriek Boon

BELGIAN SPECIALITY ALES

Judging Speciality Type Beers

Overall balance is the key to judging Speciality Type Beer. The beer should be a harmonious marriage of the beer and the special ingredients, with neither overpowering the other. The special ingredients should complement and enhance the underlying beer, and the resulting product should be pleasant to drink. The entry should be recognised as belonging to the entry Category, or at least, clearly not belonging elsewhere.

Some experienced judges will do a quick hedonistic pass at a Speciality Type Beer prior to digging deep at the particulars. The quick assessment is designed to judge whether the combination works or doesn't. (ie, to determine if flavour clashes exist). If the combination is a bad idea, it doesn't matter how well the beer is brewed, it simply won't be enjoyable. Judges should keep an open mind, however; some unexpected flavour combinations can be surprisingly delicious.

Judges should not be overly pedantic about seeking the full character of a specified beer base style. After all the beer base does not usually contain the special ingredient, so its character will not be the same. There can be interactions of flavour that produce additional sensory effects. Likewise, judges should understand that the fermentation process can transform some ingredients (particularly those with fermentable sugars), and that the ingredient character may not be the same as the unadulterated special ingredient. Therefore, judges should look for the overall pleasantness and balance of the resulting combination, as long as the beer suggests both the base beer and the speciality ingredient or process.

Creating and judging Speciality Type Beers can be very rewarding. Judges should keep in mind that a creative element exists in these styles, and that something unusual and delicious should generally be rewarded. Keep an open mind when evaluating these styles, and do not judge them as rigidly as classic styles.

Effects of added ingredients on the balance in Beer

The ingredient character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the ingredient), and should not have brewing, fermentation or handling defects. Aroma hops, yeast by-products and malt components of the underlying beer may not be as noticeable when additional ingredients are present. These components (especially hops) may also intentionally be subdued to allow the ingredient character to come through in the final presentation. When the base beer is an ale then a non-specific fruitiness / and or other fermentation by products may be present as appropriate for warmer fermentations. When the base beer is a lager then overall less fermentation products would be appropriate. Some malt aromas may be desirable, especially in dark ales. Hop aroma may be absent or balanced with the added ingredients, depending on the style. The added ingredients should add an extra complexity to the beer, but not be so prominent as to unbalance the resulting presentation.

BELGIAN SPECIALITY ALE

6.1 Belgian Specialty Ale

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.

Appearance: Variable. Colour varies considerably from pale gold to very dark. Clarity may be hazy to clear. Head retention is usually good. Generally moderate to high carbonation.

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.

Flavour: Variable. A great variety of flavours are found in these beers. Maltiness may be light to quite rich. Hop flavour and bitterness may be low to high. Spicy flavours 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 flavours produced by Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. May include flavours from adjuncts such as caramelised 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 caramelised 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	FG	IBUs	ABV
varies	varies	varies	varies

Commercial Examples: Orval; Still 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; St. Fullien Noël; Gouden Carolus Noël; Affligem Noël; Guldenburg and Pere Noël; De Ranke XX Bitter; Bush (Scaldis); Grottenbier; La Trappe Quadrupel; Weyerbacher QUAD; Bière de Miel; Verboden Vrucht; New Belgium 1554 Black Ale; Cantillon Iris; Lindemans Kriek and Framboise, and many more

Belgian Beerfest. STYLE CHART – Vital Statistics.

CATEGORY - Style	OG	FG	ABV%	IBU	COLOUR SRM
1.1 Trappist Single	1044 - 1054	1004 - 1010	4.8 – 6%	25 - 45	3 - 5
1.2 Belgian Blonde Ale	1062-1075	1008-1018	6.0-7.5%	15-30	4 – 6
1.3 Belgian Strong Golden Ale	1070-1095	1005-1016	7.5-10.5%	22-35	3 - 6
1.4 Tripel	1075-1085	1008-1014	7.5-9.5%	20-40	4.5 - 7
2.1 Dubbel	1062-1075	1008-1018	6.0-7.6%	15-25	10 - 17
2.2 Bière de Garde	1060-1080	1008-1016	6.0-8.5%	18-28	6 - 19
2.3 Belgian Strong Dark Ale	1075-1110	1010-1024	8 - 12.0%	20-35	12 - 22
3.1 Belgian Witbier	1044-1052	1008-1012	4.5-5.5%	8-20	2 - 4
3.2 Belgian Pale Ale	1048-1054	1010-1014	4.8-5.5%	20-30	8 - 14
3.3 Belgian IPA	1058-1080	1008-1016	6.2-9.5%	50 -100	5 - 8
4.1 Saison	1048-1065	1002-1008	5.0-7.0%	20-35	5 - 14
5.1 Straight (unblended) Lambic	1040-1054	1001-1010	5.0-6.5%	0-10	3 - 7
5.2 Flanders Brown Ale/Oud Bruin	1040-1074	1008-1012	4.0-8.0%	20-25	15 - 22
5.3 Gueuze	1040-1060	1000-1006	5.0-8.0%	0-10	3 - 7
5.4 Flanders Red Ale	1048-1057	1002-1012	4.6-6.5%	10-25	10 - 16
5.5 Fruit Lambic	1040-1060	1000-1010	5.0-7.0%	0-10	3 - 7
6.1 Belgian Specialty Ale	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable

Colour – SRM equivalence

Colour	SRM value
Straw	2-3
Yellow	3-4
Gold	5-6
Amber	6-9
Deep amber/light copper	10-14
Copper	14-17
Deep copper/light brown	17-18
Brown	19-22
Dark brown	22-30
Very dark brown	30-35
Black	30
Black, opaque	40