

The RARE BEER CLUB



BROUWERIJ BIERMAEKERS DRIEMASTEN GULLEGEM, WEST FLANDERS, BELGIUM

BUX TRIPEL (RARE BEER CLUB EXCLUSIVE)

The Bux lineup of beers hails from West Flanders—the only coastal province of Belgium—which budes up against the North Sea. The flat, lowlands region is known for, among other things, its especially fine production of grains and hops. Brouwerij Biermaekers Driemasten is just a short

distance from the city of Ypres, a historic center of cloth and wool production, and the brewery's core line, in fact, finds its roots in this adjacent industry. Back in 1998, for the 20th anniversary of a local sheep

breeders association, a one-off craft beer was created to celebrate. It was called "Bukske", in reference to the local dialect for a ram/male sheep.

Many years later, in July 2014, micro-brewer Dieter Van Biervliet discovered a few bottles of this original Bukske

anniversary beer left aging in a cellar. They still tasted quite good despite the fact that they were about 16 years old at that point. Dieter was able to recreate that first Bukske release from its original recipe, and an initial run of 3,000 bottles of this relaunched beer quickly sold out. Since then, the



brewery has been releasing limited-edition batches of Bukske from time to time, as well as using the lessons learned from that beer as inspiration for their own exceptional line of "Bux" beers (which proved a bit easier to pronounce).

In 2015, the Brouwerij Biermaekers Driemasten beers were awarded use of the Belgian Hops label for using only Belgian hops in the production of their beers. They also were granted the right of being an authentic West

Flemish regional product—based upon their ties to regional beer history and the use of brewing ingredients specific to the province. 2016 brought more demand for the brewery's beers, and the decision was made to expand into a separate line of Bux beers made solely with local hops. The Bux beer lineup has since expanded to include a Blond, Brown, Gold, Amber, Session, and Tripel formulation, and this month we're excited to offer the bottled Bux Tripel to our Rare Beer Club members, which is our favorite from the Bux lineup. This exceptionally generous, golden Belgian tripel is brewed with Cascade, Northern Brewer, Centennial, and 7784 hop varieties, and this will be the first time that the

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SPECIFICATIONS

Style
Tripel

Alcohol By Volume
8.5%

Serving Temperature
42–48° F

Suggested Glassware
Chalice, Goblet, or Tulip Glass

bottled-conditioned version of their Bux Tripel will be making it stateside—exclusively for the Rare Beer Club.

The Bux line of releases are brewed with the best Belgian hops that Dieter is able to source, and he stays in close communication with the brewery's hop growers throughout the year—keeping track of hop quality evolution and exchanging ideas about how to best attain various hop flavors and aromatics from each annual harvest. The brewery has also created a number of other intriguing offerings in recent years, including a Belgian pale ale called Steene Molen (aka “the Brick Mill”, commemorating details of Belgium's street horse racing) and a project with Pol Meersman from Brouwerij Dikke Jan to create *Apero.beer*, an 8.5% ABV beer that is based around the herbs used for making gin. For the latest info on Brouwerij Biermaekers Driemasten, upcoming beer projects, and more, visit the brewery's website at buxbeer.com.

BUX TRIPEL

This month we're pleased to feature Brouwerij Biermaekers Driemasten's Bux Tripel, our highlight of the brewery's current lineup, and one of the most satisfying Belgian tripels we have tried in quite a while. This fruity, spicy, herbaceous strong golden ale was brewed with locally sourced ingredients and various classic hops—including Cascade, Northern Brewer, Centennial, and 7784 (a unique variety

that was initially discovered growing wild in Belgium). Bux Tripel is top fermented and unfiltered, receiving a secondary fermentation in the bottle.

This beer's picked up a number of recent accolades, including gold awards at the European Beer Challenge 2019 and America Awards 2020. To date this beer has only been available on draft in the U.S., and only in limited amounts to a handful of markets in Florida. The bottled Bux Tripel (which gets that crucial refermentation in its bottle) has never been available here before, and we're getting it imported as an exclusive offering for the Rare Beer Club.

Bux Tripel pours a vibrant, honey-golden color capped by an exceptional layering of white, mousse-like foam that fills the remainder of the glass. Great retention and lacing. The look pulls you in: bright gold, big foam, tiny bubbles, that bottle conditioning showing nicely.

Fruit and spice lead the aromatics, emphasizing notes of honey, toastiness, and white pepper. Great mixture of fruity and phenolic elements, and so much of it coming from well-handled fermentation: ripe pear and apple, the slightest hint of banana, plus vibrant pepper and clove adding some welcome bitterness to the package. The alcohol stays well hidden here, and this release delivers again and again on core tripel parameters: generous toasty maltiness, vibrant

yeast characteristics, and just a highly engaging combination of ripe fruits, honey, and spice.

First sip presents a medium-full body with restrained sweetness, with the alcohol staying well hidden as in the aroma. Lots of honeyed maltiness, alongside fresh fruit like apple, pear, and subtle berry notes. The Belgian yeast impact is especially generous and well realized, bringing a ton of that fruit presence forth, plus pepper and subtle cloves. This tripel is incredibly easy to get into, with its fruit/spice duality playing out atop a toasty, bready core of rounded malt, everything opening up as this is allowed to warm up in the glass. This beer's hops (Cascade, Northern Brewer, Centennial, and 7784) gain emphasis near the finish, providing welcome bitterness, grass, and herbaceous notes, giving this a fresher feel overall than you'd expect. A brilliantly executed tripel overall, closing with almond, toast, and a crisp mineral bitterness.

AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

We expect Bux Tripel to age smoothly in one's cellar for years to come, but those herbal hop additions will be most prominent early on. The core rounded sweetness, herbal qualities, and overall high alcohol and carbonation are what you'll want to keep in mind for pairings. We'd try this with prosciutto, basil-topped pizza, grilled asparagus, or roasted turkey.

The RARE BEER CLUB

BROUWERIJ MAENHOUT PITTEM, WEST FLANDERS, BELGIUM

FERRE (RARE BEER CLUB EXCLUSIVE)

Brouwerij Maenhout is an artisanal brewery located in the municipality of Pittem in the West Flanders province of Belgium. The brewery got its start towards the end of 2009, founded by Thijs Maenhout and Birgit De Rammelaere, who took over the former company buildings of the Gerdox bouillon factory. Brouwerij Maenhout began with a 5-hectoliter brewery (which equates to around eight full kegs per batch), and initially all of their bottling and labeling was done by hand. They'd spend the next five years developing recipes and building an audience.

As demand outpaced their ability to produce beers on the small system in Meulebeke, they decided to relocate to a larger building in Pittem located along the Brugsesteenweg, the main road connecting the port city of Ghent and West Flanders' capital city of Bruges. The effort to expand the brewery's operations began in 2014, and the new system at their new location started production in early 2015. Unlike their earlier facility, Brouwerij Maenhout's new digs have a capacity of 1,200 hectoliters per

year and include a counter-pressure bottling line that both automates and improves the bottling process. The current facility also accommodates a 60-liter test brewery where they're able to develop new recipes, including one-off seasonals.

Brouwerij Maenhout's core releases are generally focused on Belgian style staples, including a 6.5%-ABV blonde ale called Blinde Mol (originally created for the Graszoden David Lannoo company in Pittem, and named after the subterranean mammal common in the area) as well as an 8.5% tripel called Koeketiene. The

brewery's one-off releases have included renditions of traditional Belgian styles like saisons, witbiers, dubbels, and Belgian pale ales.

This month we're excited to be able to offer our favorite of the brewery's core releases: their Ferre quadrupel. This strong Belgian ale has thus far only appeared in very limited quantities stateside, seeing minimal draft-only distribution to select markets in Florida.

The bottled version has never before been sold in the U.S., and we're having this imported exclusively for our Rare Beer Club members. Ferre quadrupel was created in tribute to one of Pittem's most famous historic residents: Father Ferdinand Verbiest, a Flemish Jesuit missionary who was known around the world in the 17th century for his keen knowledge of astronomy and mathematics. He traveled as a missionary to the Chinese province of Shanxi, and eventually became personal tutor and counselor to Emperor Kangxi, who would become the longest-reigning ruler of China (61 years!). Jesuit influence during this period was particularly strong (they ran the imperial observatory and were close with the Chinese elite), and would result in Emperor Kangxi's Edict of Toleration, which recognized Catholicism and legalized practice of Christianity throughout the country. For anyone traveling out to West

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SPECIFICATIONS

Style Quadrupel
Alcohol By Volume 10%
Serving Temperature 42-50° F
Suggested Glassware Goblet, Chalice, or Tulip Glass

Flanders, there's a visitor center dedicated to Father Ferdinand Verbiest's influence in Pittem's town hall.

Brouwerij Maenhout's brewing facility includes a tasting room that's currently open on most weekends (check their website or Facebook page for the latest hours of operation). Brewery tours need to be scheduled in advance, and consist of an approximately one-hour tour of the facility followed by sampling the Maenhout beers in their tasting room. Brewery tours can be booked just about any day of the week, by appointment only, and you can find the latest info over on their website at www.brouwerijmaenhout.be (we found Google Translate helpful).

FERRE

Brouwerij Maenhout's Ferre quadrupel is an exceptionally delicious take on the Belgian style, packed with rich core complexity from the specialty malt additions, and fermented to perfect condition. A very easy beer to dig

into, super generous flavors and aromatics from first pour, and just so well handled throughout. We were blown away by this one. This has never before appeared in bottles stateside, with previous distribution limited to kegs sent to select Florida markets. We're getting this quad imported exclusively for our Rare Beer Club members.

Ferre pours a dark, orange-amber color, though on the lighter side compared to a lot of the quads we've sampled recently, and capped by a finely bubbled foam that leaves solid lacing around the perimeter. Generous aromatics provide a clear sense of where this beer's headed overall: deep, potent maltiness with a ton of accompanying red fruits, subtle vinous warmth, and touches of caramelization throughout. Aroma continues to build as this warms. A subtle clove-like spiciness from the Belgian yeast provides a complementary bittering element.

That first sip pulled us in immediately: pitch-perfect carbonation keeps this feeling light on the palate, and that focused impact of

sweet, caramelized malts and red fruits is immediate. For being 10% ABV, this quad is super nimble and an absolute pleasure to drink. Alcohol stays tucked away throughout, contributing fruity, wine-like elements but showing restraint even after this has warmed up fully. Layers upon layers of toffee, caramels, and ripe fruits, while the Belgian yeast keeps sweetness in check, provides a hint of clove-like bitterness, and just makes this massive beer so easy to dig into. A truly delicious take on the quadrupel style.

PAIRING & AGING NOTES:

Ferre's label indicates a best-by date of approximately a year or two out, though we could see pushing it a bit beyond that. That said, this is drinking phenomenally young. The core notes of plush red fruits and caramelized malts point to roasted duck or spicy pork pairings, or to serving this alongside vanilla- or caramel-driven desserts.

BEYOND THE BOTTLE: BEER & COMICS

BY KEN WEAVER

I started making my webcomic *Massive Potions* just over three years ago, basically learning to draw publicly in my 30s, and I'll just say that it's been really good to have other folks making creative work in the beer and comics space, too. Freelance beer writing hasn't always offered an easy route to talk about some of the industry's darker issues—alcoholism, mental health, all the different forms of keeping one's shit together—and comics just generally offers up a wealth of less-conventional ways of exploring beer. Wanted to round up some highlights.

I've mentioned Em Sauter's work at Pints & Panels before (@PintsandPanels on Twitter and Insta), and she's doing as much in beer comics and illustration as anyone these days. Em is currently working on her upcoming book *Hooray for Craft Beer!* as well as an illustrated take on the Master Cicerone syllabus, plus an ongoing webcomic with *Pellicle Magazine* titled *The Adventures of Nelson & Goldy*, along with daily illustration posts like hop varieties, classic beer labels, and more. Focused mostly on beer comics is Scott Probst of Beerbecue/"T-Rex hates craft beer" (@Beerbecue7 on Twitter), whose main characters T-Rex and Pterri are more of the divine-

retribution type: taking on tough topics like gentrification, racism in the industry, hypocritical breweries and industry associations, and just iffy people in beer and beyond.

And on the print front: Ninkasi Brewing recently released their first comic book with Dark Horse Comics. Written by established comics writer Jim Gibbons and Ninkasi co-founder Jamie Floyd, and illustrated by Dark Horse Comics' Eduardo Francisco, the comic follows the adventures of brewing goddess Ninkasi and her familiar Tricerahops. The first issue was distributed for free through their website and got snapped up quickly, and Jamie has already got most of the plot worked out for the second book. Keep an eye out for that next issue.

I try to pack as much as I can into this column, but only so much room. Who did I foolishly overlook? What new comics are you digging? Let us know on Twitter via @RareBeerClub.

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