

Belgian Gueuze

Cuvee Rene

Brouwerij Lindemans - Vlezenbeek, Belgium
5.2% ABV. Year-round. Bottles. Bottled in March 2012

Lindemans Cuvée René is authentic “Oude Geuze,” Every batch blended by hand and reefermented in the bottle. Cuvée Rene is a blend of lambics of various ages. Lindemans, which originally made only traditional unfiltered gueuze, switched to the filtered version because it is quicker to make. Realizing that there were almost no traditional gueuzes being produced, Merchant du Vin convinced René Lindemans, Head Brewer, to discontinue the filtered version and concentrate only on the finest traditional bottle-conditioned product. Cuvée René was born.

About Lindemans

Six generations ago, in 1822, the Lindemans family owned a farm in Vlezenbeek near Brussels. They decided to intensify Lambic brewing activities during winter, when less farm work had to be done. The farm produced wheat and barley, the raw materials of the Lambic. Due to the growing success of the Lambic, in 1930, the farm-activities were stopped. It was in that year that they started the production of Geuze and Kriek. Because of the increasing demand of Lindemans' Lambic-beers the antiquated brewery became too slow to follow the production, so the Lindemans family decided in 1991 to build a new brewery next the old one to meet the growing needs of the market without any loss of quality. The capacity of the brewery in 2009 was 83500 Hl of which 50% was intends for export to ea. France, U.S.A., Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, Argentina, England, Italy, Spain, Portugal, etc.

Girardin Gueuze (1882, Black label)

Brouwerij Girardin - Lindenberg, Dilbeek Belgium
5% ABV. Year-round. Bottles.

About Girardin

The largest of the authentic lambic brewers and gueuze blenders left in the Senne Valley. It is a farm brewery, on what was once an aristocrat's estate, at St. Ulriks-Kapelle. The brewery began in 1845, as part of an aristocrat's estate. The Girardins have owned it since 1882, through four generations. They grow their own wheat, brew lambic in winter and produce Pils in summer. The Girardins use 40 percent wheat in their lambic, and still have a mill that grinds the grain between stones.

Classic Gueuze

Ale aged in Oak Barrels

Brasserie Cantillon - Anderlecht, Brussels, Belgium
5% ABV. Year-round. Bottles, draft (limited). Bottled on Feb 2012

A blend of one, two, and three year-old lambics, refermented in the bottle. The Gueuze 100% Lambic Cantillon represents half of the production of the brewery.

About Cantillon

The present Cantillon brewery in Brussels was built in 1900 and Master Brewer Jean-Pierre Van Roy remains a tireless champion of authenticity in lambic brewing. Cantillon is today one of only two lambic breweries still in operation that produces nothing but authentic, unsweetened, unfiltered, unpasteurized lambic. The mash at Cantillon consists, by long tradition among lambic brewers, of two-thirds malted barley and one-third unmalted wheat. In 1999 the Cantillon Brewery decided to go back to its roots and use organically grown cereals only. The hops that are added to the boil in great profusion have been aged for several years, eliminating all trace of hop flavor or aroma, but not diminishing their original preservative powers. 20 or more different strains of wild yeast may be represented in any one batch of lambic beer. The fermenting casks are all at least 40 years old and most held French wine, while a few held either wine, port, or sherry from the Iberian peninsula. They are laid to rest in every nook and cranny of the brewery, where they will stay unmolested through at least one summer. Van Roy watches over every cask in the brewery, periodically tasting the contents of each to determine whether it should lie for one year, two years, or three years. During the late winter and early spring, he will match and blend one, two, and three-year old lambics to arrive at a balanced texture and flavor. There is no formula for blending, and no expectation of consistency from year to year. Jean-Pierre says merely that he hopes to achieve the same “harmony” each time.

Belgian Gueuze

Oude Geuze

Blended lambic beer aged in oak

Brouwerij Drie Fonteinen - Beersel, Belgium

6% ABV. Year-round. Bottles. Bottled in March 2012.

A true geuze - a blend of 1, 2, and 3 year-old lambic, unfiltered and unpasteurized, and aged in the bottle for at least a year after blending. Re-fermentation in the bottle gives this geuze its famous champagne-like spirtziness. The lambic that goes into this is brewed only with 60% barley malt, 40% unmalted wheat, aged hops, and water, spontaneously fermented by wild yeasts, and matured in oak casks.

About Drie Fonteinen

Drie Fonteinen is the only remaining traditional geuze blender in Belgium, using only 100% spontaneously fermented lambic beer, aged in oak casks, with no artificial sweeteners or other additives. The blender is connected to the very popular Drie Fonteinen Restaurant in Beersel, on the outskirts of Brussels. The proprietor, Armand Debelder, buys pure lambic from three breweries in Belgium, ages them in oak, and blends them, employing the skill, knowledge, and supreme passion for real geuze that his father handed down to him.

Oude Gueuze Tilquin à L'Ancienne

Gueuzerie Tilquin -

6% ABV. Year-round. Bottles.

The "Gueuze Tilquin - draught version" (4.8% alc/vol) is not Old Gueuze. It is blend of 1 and 2 years old lambics, with a specific lambic low in alcohol called Meerts. The "Oude Gueuze Tilquin à l'ancienne" (6% alc/vol) is the real Old Gueuze. It is a blend of 1, 2 and 3 years old lambics, re-fermented in the bottle for at least 6 months. These lambics are coming from worts brewed by Boon, Lindemans, Girardin and Cantillon breweries.

About Tilquin

Gueuzerie Tilquin, run by a former bioengineer named Pierre Tilquin (it's pronounced "till-CAN," with a nasalized final vowel), is in fact the first new lambic blender to emerge in almost 15 years. (<http://www.chicagoreader.com/Bleeder/archives/2013/03/04/pucker-up-for-gueuze-tilquin>)

A Few Notes:

- The French spelling is gueuze and the Dutch spelling is geuze.
- Generally, younger lambic is thinner, livelier, and milder on the palate.
- The older lambic is harder, more complex, and resoundingly sour.
- Payottenland: a district west of central Brussels, and home to lambic.
- Lambic: Spontaneously fermenting style of wheat beer unique to Belgium, notably the Senne Valley.
- Gueuze: A blend of old and young lambic.
- Pronunciation!: "gooze", like "booze"; "goo-zah"; "gur-ze"; "huse"; "ger-zer"

Gueuze (From Beeradvocate)

A traditional Belgian blend of young and old Lambics, which are then bottle after blending, then aged for 2-3 years to produce a dryer, fruitier and more intense style of Lambic. There is no hop character, some are filtered and force carbonated if not pasteurized as well. Some say that this is the more harsh lambic as the sourness is pretty intense.

Belgian Gueuze

BJCP Guideline

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. 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, 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 predominantly 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. 3 year-old lambic, unfiltered and unpasteurized, and aged in the bottle for at least a year after blending. Refermentation in the bottle gives this gueuze its famous champagne-like spirtziness. The lambic that goes into this is brewed only with 60% barley malt, 40% unmalting wheat, aged hops, and water, spontaneously fermented by wild yeasts, and matured in oak casks.