

Erik Verdonck



~ BEERSTRONOMY ~

Delicious Dishes from
the Finest Belgian Brewers



Food Photography: Kris Jacobs

 | LANNOO





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Taste masters

Sweet, sour, bitter and salt. With the exception of the latter, all of these basic tastes can be found in beer. Belgian brewers can conjure up surprising aromas and tastes in the glass with the use of malt, water, hop and yeast, but also with herbs, fruit, coffee, chocolate or even wood shavings. Beer can be as dry as a saison or almost syrupy, like a quadrupel. When it comes to sour lambic beers and Flemish red ales, yeast and maturation on wood play the leading role. Hop or roast malts contribute the bitterness, although there are some hop varieties that are aromatic rather than bitter. Even only using a handful of ingredients, the playing field is well-nigh endless. Brewers select their ingredients with care and have mastered the art of dosage and reproduction. Brewing is transforming, just like cooking. Belgian brewers are striving for balance in the glass. They like to produce quaffable, balanced beers. The higher quality beers continue to intrigue you – ‘What am I tasting here?’ – and are never boring. Quite a few traditional Belgian beer styles have stood the test of time. They now constitute the basic references for beer lovers across the world and form part of our beer culture. Don’t forget about our tried and tested rituals. After all, an abbey beer is served in a chalice-shaped glass, ‘otherwise it doesn’t taste like it should.’ We also make sure that we don’t serve our beer too chilled because if we do, the aromas do not deploy to the full and the collar does not get the chance to develop. A beer that has been brewed with care should be tasted and drunk with care.

Beer seeks plate

The Belgian brasserie cuisine is renowned around the world. You could not possibly imagine it without beer. Chefs are cooking with beer. Undoubtedly, your mum has her own traditional recipe for rabbit or Flemish *karbonade* with Trappist beer as a major ingredient. You also find beer in sauces or marinades used to prepare cod, paling in ’t groen (eel in a green sauce) or mussels. Pork cheeks, *koninginnenhapjes*, beuling (black pudding), chicken, lamb, haddock, escargots ... Think of a dish and a beer will spring to mind. The chef will often recommend a beer that reinforces the aromas and tastes of the dish or provides an exciting contrast. When it comes to a successful food pairing, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. You can simply taste that it all comes together, this unique taste experience. Put your trust in the chef when he recommends a kriek beer to go with a sabayon, or a dark Trappist or stout with a chocolate ice cream.

Undoubtedly, the last word has not yet been spoken about beer and cheese. They were made for one another. There are several beer cheeses where you find beer in the heart – the curds – of the cheese. The beer tones down the salt, cuts through the grease and quenches your thirst. How about a cheese-and-beer evening?

Beerstronomy

The Beerstronomy beer cookery book pays homage to the better quality Belgian beer kitchen that, after all, does so much justice to our beers. We are letting the taste makers have their say. Brewers talk about their passion for beer, chefs tell us about their love for fine dining and the noble drink that comes from the modest barley. UNESCO has added Belgian beer culture to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Our breweries, beers and brasseries come with the highest recommendation. Are Belgians lovers of fine dining in the Burgundian style? Don’t doubt it for a second. Follow our guide!

Read, cook, taste, drink, eat and enjoy!

Erik Verdonck

*In wine there is wisdom
In beer there is strength
In water there is bacteria*









AMBURON

BELGIAN CRAFTBREWERY

It has taken fifty years but the long wait is now over. Davy Daniëls, brewer-owner of Amburon Belgian Craftbrewery, is fond of his city. He has good reasons to be proud. Tongeren can lay claim to the honorific title of 'oldest city in Belgium.'



History oozes from every pore. A walk around Tongeren takes you from Roman times through the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment all the way up to the 21st century. Parts of the Roman and medieval walls have been preserved with the Moerenpoort taking pride of place. Take a stroll through the medieval beguinage, admire the imposing Basilica with its splendid cloisters and find yourself eye-to-eye with Ambiorix, the Chief of the Ambidores tribe, who made life very difficult for the Romans. Tongeren is of and for all times, a huge amount of history condensed into only a few square kilometres. In and around the city you will find twenty-four churches, numerous monuments, preserved villages views and protected landscapes.

| A FUTURE FOR OUR PAST |

Davy Daniëls was brought up with a love of beer and has been working in the world of beer his entire life. In 1961 his grandfather established a drinks store that exists up to this day with a range comprising around 600 Belgian beers. Davy has a perfect idea of what Belgian

inhabitants of Tongeren. The Amburon tanks produce a flow of Tungri Blond, Bitter and Dubbel. As well as this basic range, Amburon produces regular limited editions such as Tungri Walk On The Wild Side, based on Tungri Dubbel and aged in Belgian whisky barrels. Another example is Tungri Perfect Day, made with Tungri Blond and aged in chardonnay barrels. Davy:

'We are focusing on balanced and accessible beers, with a pure taste, sometimes just a little bit different from what people are used to traditionally.'

beer lovers are looking for. Has this wish lish changed over the years? Davy: 'It has indeed. The world of beer is very dynamic at the moment. Beer is hot. Today's beer lovers are no longer happy with just a few crates of their favourite beer. They want diversity and have a more open attitude towards novelties. Having said that, newcomers like us have to make sure first of all that the basic beers are as good as they can be and are known and appreciated. We already have managed to do that quite successfully in our own country and we are busy paving the way abroad.' This Tongeren microbrewery likes to be different: it wants to be innovative but rooted in Belgian beer tradition. Davy: 'We are focusing on balanced and accessible beers, with a pure taste, sometimes just a little bit different from what people are used to traditionally. We keep track of the latest trends in wood-aged beers, the use of wild yeasts and up-and-coming beer styles. We brew in the artisan way, with care and precision, so we can guarantee a stable quality.' Tungri is synonymous with a family of traditional beers from the local area but with a quirky twist all of its own. The name of the brewery is a reference to the oldest

"We also feel that light beers with plenty of taste have a great future. You can expect this type of "session beers" from us.' Low in alcohol... but with plenty of taste? Bert Housen, the brewer, is taking up the gauntlet.

| TRIPLESSE |

Belgian dubbels are strong, dark brown beers. This beer type was inspired by the classic, dark abbey beers. Tungri Dubbel is mild and well-balanced. This beer re-ferments in the bottle which contributes to its complexity. The roasted malt in the beer provides a slight bitterness with touches of coffee and caramel. The hop varieties selected make for a subtly zesty character that makes itself felt until the finish. Tungri Bitter is a Belgian bitter that, on the beer map, is found halfway between a traditional pale ale and an IPA (India Pale Ale). The hop bitter is quite restrained. This beer has a citrusy, fruity aroma with balanced, intensely warm bitter touches from the hop, followed by a mildly fresh finish and at the very end, a pleasant bitterness. Tungri Blond is a typically strong blonde. Some say it is a tripel. The yeast and the addition of hop on three different occasions determine the taste. A fresh blonde beer with a zesty and slightly fruity aroma, fresh on the tongue with a balanced, restrained



bitter and a dry finish with touches of zest. Quality is paramount and has guided the brewer in his choice to produce unfiltered beers that re-ferment in the bottle. This means that the beers are better protected and develop a higher degree of complexity. The pronounced aromas of both the Tungri Blond and the Tungri Bitter are created by the dry hopping during cold storage. The hop is added to the beer when it is still warm and cools down together with the beer in the lager tank, a process that releases additional hop aromas. Tungri Walk On The Wild Side is a dark brown dubbel that has aged in American bourbon barrels from Belgian Owl. Full in the mouth with nuances of whisky, oak, coffee and caramel.

| APPLES AND PEARS |

The brewery is surrounded by orchards and makes a fine starting point for a journey of discovery across the undulating Haspengouw region, also known as the fruit barn of Belgium. Great for a walk or a bike ride between castles, ancient water mills and picturesque villages. In the area between Tongeren and Sint-Truiden, however, all of the focus is on fruit production. This is the home of Jonagold apples and Conférence pears. Borgloon is home to a historic syrup factory. The syrup, or 'stroop', produced here is completely natural as it is made with the pectin contained in apples and pears. Other produce from



'As a brewer I include food pairing tips on the label to inspire our customers.' Good news for gourmets.

the region includes watercress, bursting with vitamins and grown in Lauw near Tongeren, jenever and speculoos biscuits from Hasselt and the renowned blue-veined cheese called the 'Grevenbroeker', made by the Catharinadal dairy from Achel and, for that reason, also known as 'Achelse blauwe.' Does beer fit into this list of culinary specialties? Davy: 'Oh yes. In our beer country, beer should take pride of place at the table. We like to invite chefs to taste our beers and transform them into lovely recipes. As a brewer I include food pairing tips on the label to inspire our customers.' Good news for gourmets. In the nearby village of Kortessem the call for beer pairing came through loud and clear, judging by the recipes created by Lieven Treunen, chef at Oud Corteshem. He is at the helm of a busy, popular brasserie with a contemporary interior, a menu that changes with great frequency and a fine range of beers and wines. The rural influence of the Haspengouw is only just around the corner. The spacious beer garden transports you into the heart of the country. Oud Corteshem is proud of its honest cooking that is served in generous portions. The menu is complemented by seasonal fare advertised on the blackboard. We can recommend the Oud Corteshem pasta with its abundance of sea food and a sauce made with oil and fish stock; also *koninginnenhapjes* (vol-au-vent), spareribs and fried tuna...



'IN OUR BEER COUNTRY, BEER SHOULD TAKE PRIDE OF PLACE AT THE TABLE.'



| INGREDIENTS |

2 Jonagold apples
half a bottle of Tungri Bitter
4 prime rib steaks from the Haspengouw
(200 g/each)
2 dl brown fond
100 g butter
pepper and salt

Entrecote from the Haspengouw with marinated apple in Tungri Bitter

Slice the apples and marinate in the Tungri Bitter. Fry the rib steaks how you like them and season with pepper and salt. Quickly fry the apple slices and keep warm. Deglaze the frying pan used for the steaks with the brown fond and the Tungri Bitter and reduce until the gravy has reached the desired consistency.

Arrange the meat on a plate, place several apple slices on top and pour over the meat gravy. Serve with a freshly made salad and pommes frites.





| INGREDIENTS |

1.5 kg potatoes
3 leeks
4 fillets of tub gurnard (or use a different variety of white fish)
200 g butter
5 egg yolks
half a bottle Tungri Blond
2 dl cream
1 tray cherry tomatoes
pepper
salt
nutmeg
lemon juice

Tub gurnard with mashed leek & potato and mousseline sauce with Tungri Blond

Peel the potatoes and bring to the boil. Then add the rinsed and sliced leeks and boil together until tender. Drain and allow to dry briefly on the hob. Blend the potatoes and the leeks into a rough mash ("preistoemp") and season with pepper, salt, nutmeg and some butter and egg yolk if you wish. Fry the gurnard on each side using butter, season with pepper and salt and cook until done for eight minutes in a pre-heated oven. Beat four egg yolks and half a bottle of Tungri Blond on low heat until you obtain a smooth mousseline sauce. As soon as the egg yolks begin to set, take the saucepan off the heat and with great care, add a little clarified butter. Season to taste with pepper, salt and lemon juice. Whisk the cream until medium thickness and fold into the sauce.

Arrange the 'preistoemp' on the plate with the tub gurnard and pour over the mousseline sauce. Garnish with a cherry tomato.



