

BELGIAN PILS



INGREDIENTS

MALT

Dingeman Pilsner

HOPS

Perle, Saphir, Tettnang, Saaz

YEAST

Lager

TASTING NOTES

Fluffy clouds of foam on top of a golden body. Spritzy aromas of lemon, lavender, rainier cherries, and fresh greens. Smooth maltiness with a pleasant earthiness, herbaceous, orange, sourdough bread, and wildflowers. Finishes rich, but with a firm maltiness, while balanced with a pleasant herbal finish.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Fatty meats in curry sauce and jerk chicken. Excellent with seafood: fish, shellfish, turbot calamari, crab, clams, sole, shrimp, oysters and lobster. Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel, and herring. Sausages including chorizo, andouille, and merguez bacon, sausage, and any other breakfast meats work wonderfully.

SMOOTH MALTINESS,
ZESTY, LAVENDER

HISTORY

Excerpt From “The Everyday Pintje: Searching for Belgian Pils By Jeff Alworth”

Two things seem to be common: Belgian malt and Saaz hops. Although Belgium has historic hop-growing areas, the acreage today is relatively miniscule. A tradition seems to have formed around the peppery snap of Saaz—which adds zip even to a low-bitterness pils. While few breweries divulge much about their process or ingredients, those that do often cite Saaz. Verhaeghe and Bavik use Saaz in their pilsners, as does Moortgat in its Bel Pils.

At the Brasserie de la Senne in Brussels, cofounder and brewmaster Yvan De Baets spent a long time thinking about Belgian pils before releasing Zenne Pils in 2020. He agrees that malt is one key to the distinctiveness. “The malt will also play a big role, indeed,” he says. “There is something that seems to be common. They are less hoppy and bitter than the Northern German pilsners, and less malty than the Southern ones.” De Baets also notes the routine use of corn, though that’s more typical in the mass-market versions.

De Baets uses organic Dingemans pilsner in his all-malt, German-style pils. Halfway Crooks also uses Dingemans, which Ginderachter describes as “more robust than German malts—more golden.” To my palate, the Belgian malts are slightly sweeter and less grainy than German counterparts—but in a pils, that may also owe something to corn in the grist.

What else? The yeast are important, even if the fermentation profiles vary. Dupont, of course, is one of those outfits with an older brewery not designed for lager. After boiling it on their direct-flame system, Dupont ferments the wort in the same squat, square fermentors that help make their saison so distinctive. Dedeycker’s grandfather Rosier selected the lager strain in the 1940s, and it’s the same one they use today. After fermentation, it spends six weeks lagering.