

# The 'Weird and Wonderful' styles you will find on our taps...

## Saison

A pale ale that is highly carbonated, fruity and spicy. It was historically brewed with low alcohol levels, but modern productions of the style have moderate to high levels of alcohol.

As a beer style, saison began as a pale ale brewed in the cooler, less active months in farmhouses in Wallonia, the French-speaking region of Belgium, and stored for drinking in the summer months. These farmhouse beers would have been of a lower ABV than modern saisons; around 3 to 3.5% ABV on average, rising in the early 20th century to between 4.5 and 6.5% ABV. They were served to farm workers who were entitled to up to five litres each workday. Brewing outside the summer months was common for all brewers before the discovery of refrigeration, due to the likelihood of the beer spoiling while fermenting in the summer, the height of airborne bacteria activity. Farmers possibly also brewed during the cooler months to provide work for their permanent staff during the quieter period. After brewing, the beer was stored until the summer when the main consumers would be seasonal workers ("saisonniers").

Historically, saisons did not share enough identifiable characteristics to pin them down as a specific style, but rather were a group of refreshing summer ales made by farmers. Each farm brewer would make his own distinctive version. Although most commercial examples now range from 5 to 8% ABV, originally saisons were meant to be refreshing and it is thought they had alcohol levels ranging from 3 to 3.5%.

## Gose

A top-fermented beer that originated in Goslar, Germany (where it gets its name). It is brewed with at least 50% of the grain bill being malted wheat. Dominant flavors in gose include a lemon sourness, an herbal characteristic, and a strong saltiness (the result of either local water sources or added salt). Gose beers typically do not have prominent hop bitterness, flavours, or aroma. The beers typically have a moderate alcohol content of 4 to 5% ABV. Because of the use of coriander and salt, gose does not comply with the Reinheitsgebot - it is allowed an exemption on the grounds of being a regional specialty. It acquires its characteristic sourness through inoculation with lactobacillus bacteria after the boil. Gose belongs to the same family of sour wheat beers which were once brewed across Northern Germany and the Low Countries. Other beers of this family are Belgian Witbier, Berliner Weisse, and Broyhan

## Coffee Beers

As the name suggests, this can be either a lager or ale with coffee added to boost flavour. While stouts and porters are popular base styles for coffee beer, many craft breweries are experimenting with other styles, like cream ales and India pale ales. Brewers may steep the beans in either water or beer to impart java flavour without adding acidity. Barrel-aged or wood-influenced versions may show signs of oxidation, including sherry notes and other advanced flavours. The unique brew we have is a hoppy, biscuity red ale with rich, fruity notes.

## Belgian Pale Ale

The Belgian-style pale ale is gold to copper in colour and can have caramel or toasted malt flavour. The style is characterized by low but noticeable hop bitterness, flavour and aroma. It is likely the Belgian pale ale was brewed in one form or another all the way back in the mid-1700s, but it would take the rising popularity of German "light beers" for the pale ale to truly come into its own.

The late 1800s saw the newly minted refrigeration technology coming into common use and with it came the ability to brew and store lagers anywhere. No longer were lager brewers tied to caves and the seasons. This sudden freedom saw a shift in the European brewing continuum with the spread and immediate popularity of the "new" light, sophisticated-seeming German lagers and crisply pleasing Czech pilsners. The Belgian brewers couldn't have helped but sit up and take notice of this shifting tide. To combat this suffocating popularity they revamped their recipes. They drew some inspiration from experience with British ales and interestingly, used much the same ingredients as the encroaching threat. They went with pale malts and much the same noble hops used in pilsners. But the yeast remained all Belgian, creating a light coloured ale with, a low hop profile, notes of pear and orange esters, and spicy phenols. What they came away with was a session beer or "everyday beer" equal to the pilsner, but with its own distinct, and very much Belgian character. It is said that these same pales satisfied British fighting men stationed in Belgium during World War I. The style solidified somewhat after World War II into what we see in most examples today. A version of a pale ale that showcases a light but present malt profile, gentle handling of hops (often using aged hops), little noticeable alcohol, some bitterness, and of course, the fruit/spice of Belgian yeast.

## Sours

A beer which has an intentionally acidic, tart or sour taste. The most common sour beer styles are Belgian: lambics, gueuze and Flanders red ales. At one time, all beers were sour to some degree, as pure yeast cultures were not available, the starter used from one batch to another usually contained some wild yeast and bacteria. Unlike modern brewing, which is done in a sterile environment to guard against the intrusion of wild yeast, sour beers are made by intentionally allowing wild yeast strains or bacteria into the brew. Traditionally, Belgian brewers allowed wild yeast to enter the brew naturally through the barrels or during the cooling of the wort in a coolship open to the outside air – an unpredictable process that many modern brewers avoid. The most common agents used to intentionally sour beer are Lactobacillus, Brettanomyces, and Pediococcus. Another method for achieving a tart flavour is adding fruit during the aging process to spur a secondary fermentation or contribute microbes present on the fruit's skin. Because of the uncertainty involved in using wild yeast, the sour beer brewing process is extremely unpredictable.

The beer takes months to ferment and can take years to mature.