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NEWSLETTER

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**“NO SOLDIER CAN
FIGHT UNLESS
HE IS PROPERLY
FED ON BEEF AND
BEER.”**

**JOHN CHURCHILL,
FIRST DUKE OF
MARLBOROUGH**

SUMMER TIME IN BELGIUM.

Summer time in Belgium always starts with a big bang. A major rock festival in the village of Werchter, between Brussels and Antwerp, close to the university city of Leuven, features numerous international artists (+ 50 acts!) over 4 days! (www.rockwerchter.be) It is Wood-

stock revised. It is organized the first weekend after the exams are done in all schools and universities: the last weekend of June. Indeed, school doesn't end before the end of June in Belgium, and starts again on September 1st.

The whole economy of the Werchter



village is focused on open-air concerts, since they organize plenty during the spring and the summer. The company that started 30 years ago with the organization of these festivals is now the world leader in open-air stages, and tours with all major acts around the world.

When the Rolling Stones opened their European tour there a few months ago, traffic between Brussels and Antwerp was stuck for a whole day. It took some people more than 5 hours to reach the event.

To avoid these traffic jams, special trains all over Belgium are scheduled, and you can ride for free!

On Sunday evening, all streets leading to Werchter become one-way streets out of Werchter.



All farms in the neighborhood become campgrounds and tent cities.

In town, everybody is trying to sell food and beer to the passing wandering public. You put a table in front of your house and you start selling. Indeed, you don't need a license to sell alcohol in Belgium. Youth-organizations are the first to set up such tables to make some money.

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All cities have at least one festival during the summer months: music, theater, cycling tournaments, historical parades, tractor pulling, river jumping... The 40 miles of beach in Belgium with its 15 cities has nightly events. Even smaller villages jump into the action and organize events during one or two of the weekends. In many cases these events are sponsored by the city, since it attracts a lot of tourists--especially when the weather is great. But that is sometimes a problem in Belgium. We used to say; "We are lucky if summer falls on a weekend this



year." But that is exaggerated. At least half of Belgium's days are sunny during July and August, but when all these sunny days fall in the middle of the week, then...

Breweries also join in the trade of organizing festivals. Brewery Roman for example organizes several rock concerts within its walls. Brewery Van Steenberge sets up tents on a whole market square in the city of Gent during the Gentse Feesten. Brewery De Halve Maan in Brugge, Van Eecke in Watou and Silly in the Hainaut region are other examples of breweries being organizers or major sponsors of such festivals. The beer consumption during such events is enormous. It is nice weather, people are in good company, plenty of money changes hands,

there is music in the air, every body is thirsty and in a fantastic mood. Van Steenberge sells over 50 kegs of Piraat, Gulden Draak and Augustijn per day! Brewery Roman taps straight out of its brewery tanks!

Most companies (at least those not in the hospitality industry) close for 2 or 3 weeks during summer. Indeed, all workers have at least 22 days paid vacation in Belgium.

Companies like to set fixed dates to consume most of these days at the same time by all workers...in the summer. Otherwise it would be impossible to keep the factory working during the year. The vast majority of the Belgians do not take holidays outside Belgium. Since Belgium is small, about the size of Maryland, it is easy to go away for one or a few days, but why would you?

There are festivals everywhere, with plenty of good food and exceptional beers available on every corner of every street. The Flemish coast and the Walloon Ardennes attract the most people. However, when Belgians do go to 'foreign' countries, Spain and France are the destinations of choice.



The most rewarded Belgian Beer



The only beer that is actually brewed and lagered in Brugge (Bruges).

Pale blond ale, crowned with a white head, blooms with a fruity pronounced aroma, hints of lemon, and hits the palate with a refreshing dryness, embellished by hints of spices and orange, balanced by an underlying faint malty sweetness. This is one of the lighter Pale golden ales with an alcohol content of 6%. The beer finishes with a short, fruity taste that somewhat sticks to the palate.

Because of the more conservative use of hops, and thus the lack of an outspoken bitterness, this beer is very well suited to use in the preparation of food dishes and deserts. Sabayons is a given, but also many sauces will be highly enhanced with this beer.



WORLD BEER CUP®
Gold Award

2006

World Beer Cup - Seattle
Belgian & French style Ale



Gold Award 2006

European Beer Star - Nürnberg
Belgian Style Ale



Gold Award 2006

Monde Sélection - Prague
Pale Ale



11.2 oz - 4 packs, 6 in case
25.4 oz - 12 in case
Metal cylinder 6 case
1/4 barrel (30 liter)
glasses 6 in case

Gulden Draak®

A Treasure of a beer, protected by the Dragon

Look closely at the Dragon, depicted on the label, and you recognize the style of a dragon, as used by the Vikings, for example on the bow of their ships. Notice that the dragon has no feet.

Indeed, the origin of the Gulden Draak dates back to the early 12th century, when the Norwegian King Sigrid Mangusson became Emperor of Constantinople (today: Istanbul in Turkey) during the crusade of 1111 A.C.. He commissioned a big Golden Dragon statue, and placed it on the tallest tower of the local Cathedral. There it stood for about one hundred years, until a Fleming, Count Baldwin IX, became Emperor during yet another crusade. He loved the statue so much that he took it down. He brought it with him to Flanders to put on the tower of his local church in Watervliet, north of Gent, where it stood for quite a while. But in 1382, the city of Brugge captured the statue. The proud citizens of Gent, the emerging economical power in Flanders in that era, couldn't accept such a heist in their own backyard, and went to war with Brugge. Since the Gulden Draak statue is now on top of the Belfry of Gent, it is clear who won the war. The statue becomes the main symbol of the power of Gent, which took on the leadership of Flanders from then on.

Although the Vikings were known to drink and enjoy strong ales, one can ask the question, how well the 14th century citizens of Gent still know the Viking origins of the Statue? Brewing a BIG celebration beer is always in style to commemorate a success. The Gulden Draak is absolute a BIG beer, and is brewed today by Br. Van Steenberge in Ertvelde, North of Gent, a couple of bow shots from Watervliet.

Slaying the dragon, as a beer-connoisseur, you will find a beautiful balance of a toffee-like sweetness, mouth-fulfilling malts, with hoppy undertones, all complemented by a joyful feeling of happiness. This is a very complex barley wine, that hides it 10.5 % alcohol by volume. Sip it slowly. Share it with your significant other and all you'll need is each other. Although you may consider this beer a dessert on its own, some epicures have it with a rich chocolate cake!



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