

THREE DAYS OF HOP FUELLED COMPETITION

It may not be a showdown between Saint George and the Dragon, but 1,650 beers will be engaging in a merciless battle during the Brussels Beer Challenge which takes up residence in Mons on November 1, 2 and 3.

The home of the Doudou festival is the Brussels Beer Challenge's first foray into Hainaut, after seven previous encounters (Brussels, Leuven, Liège, Antwerp, Brussels, Namur and Mechelen). As one of Belgium's prime regions for brewing, Hainaut was an obvious choice of location for the competition. The now world-renowned Saison style is said to have originated in this area.

Mons, a land of brewing

Like Belgium and other countries, the capital of the province of Hainaut is at the very heart of the much-publicised brewing revolution. In under ten years, the number of breweries in Mons and its surrounding area has almost trebled, with eleven to date, not to mention the many projects underway.

The BBC competition travels from venue to venue and although it continues to be hosted by Belgium, its scope is international. Breweries from all over the world enter their brews to benchmark them against their peers from across the globe, both nations with a brewing tradition (Germany, Belgium, England...) and countries with a younger but already flourishing beer industry (China, the Baltic States...).

Alcohol-free beers gain traction

2019 is confirming a trend for non-alcoholic beers. In both specialist stores and supermarkets, alcohol-free beers are becoming increasingly popular. The major Belgian retailers have a range of 15 to 30 SKUs.

« The non-alcoholic beer category is the only one in growth mode at Carrefour (almost +6%). Interestingly, the vast majority of innovations by the major manufacturers and even the smallest breweries fall under this category. »

Frédéric Culem, buyer with Carrefour Belgium.

The alcohol-free and gluten-free categories confirm the interest shown by industrial and craft brewers in these segments. Last year, the European Revelation Trophy was even awarded to a non-alcoholic beer from a Dutch brewery. Local Hainaut firms do not intend to be outdone when it comes to gluten-free beers and now specialise in crafting them.

« Alcohol-free beers are no longer niche products. All brewers must take an interest in them in the short to medium term if they do not want to lose market share. »

Thomas Costenoble, Director of the BBC.

1,650 competing beers

1,500 beers were entered in the two previous competitions. The eighth event has seen strong growth with 1,650 beers competing for medals in dozens of categories, with the highest number of entries going to IPAs, tripels and fruity beers. Although the latter two styles are fairly specific to Belgium, IPA (Indian Pale Ale) was revived a few years ago in the United States and nowadays most breweries offer products in this category.

But the suspense of the challenge lies in the fact that a Malaysian beer can quite easily come away with a gold medal for a Belgian-style white beer, for example. That's because the 1,650 beers will be tasted blind by a 90-member panel which is as international as the breweries taking part, with judges coming from 27 different countries.

THE BRUSSELS BEER CHALLENGE RETURNS TO WALLONIA

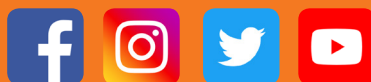
After Mechelen in 2018, Mons is hosting the 2019 Brussels Beer Challenge. Beer entries will be grouped into consistent flights based on their origin, typicity and style. The judges will assess entries according to strict, objective criteria. The best beers in each category will be awarded gold, silver and bronze medals.

**The tasting sessions will take place every morning
on November 1, 2 and 3
at the Wallonia Conference Centre, Mons (WCCM).**

The Brussels Beer Challenge offers brewers from around the world a unique opportunity to benchmark against the finest Belgian beers. Although competitions of the same style are held in other countries, it makes perfect sense for Belgium to provide brewers from across the globe with a representative but independent marketing platform, allowing them to stand out in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

THE TASTING SESSIONS ARE OPEN TO THE MEDIA.
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ACCREDITATIONS:
THOMAS.COSTENOBLE@BECOMEV.COM
+32 476 91 70 49

FOLLOW THE COMPETITION AT:
#BBEERCHALLENGE
@BBEERCHALLENGE



ORGANISED BY BECOME V
RUE DE MÉRODE 60 - B-1060 BRUSSELS
WWW.BRUSSELSBEERCHALLENGE.COM