



THE RESULTS ARE IN... QUALITY & DIVERSITY WIN!

The objectives of the **Brussels Beer Challenge** are quite simple. First and foremost, the Brussels Beer Challenge aims to organize a professional and competitive contest among brewers. Additionally, the competition seeks to promote beer culture in general, and Belgian beer culture in particular. Finally, the awards offer consumers a reliable point of reference and a quality label. This year marked the thirteenth edition of the Brussels Beer Challenge, held in the vibrant city of Ghent. This beautiful historic city, with its rich cultural life, welcoming residents, and stunning architecture, made it the ideal host city.

Over three days, a panel of 72 internationally renowned beer experts tasted **1,705 beers** from all corners of the world. The participating beers were divided into categories based on origin, specificity, and style, and were carefully judged. At the end of the three tasting days, the best beers in each category were awarded gold, silver, or bronze medals. After all, quality always rises to the top. **We noted a few trends.**

Fruit beers

The fruit beer category continues to gain popularity, with no fewer than **95 entries**. Fruit beers are extremely popular because they often have a very refreshing taste. They appeal to a wide audience, from beer enthusiasts to those who don't typically drink beer, thanks to their versatile and often surprising flavor combinations. The variety of fruit types contributes to a broad range of flavors. Moreover, many brewers enjoy experimenting with different fruits. Belgium (**Rodenbach Alexander**), China (**Hurricane Sour Ale**), the Netherlands (**Lorre by Brewery Homeland**), and the United States (**Tower Station Turbo Tower IPA**) took home prizes.

Non-Alcoholic and Low-Alcohol Beers

As expected, **non-alcoholic and low-alcohol beers** are on the rise. The evolution toward more and better non-alcoholic beers is due to a 'perfect storm'. More people today are aware of the effects of alcohol and prefer a more mindful and healthy lifestyle. In addition, there is a growing demographic of people who do not consume alcohol for religious reasons, and increased alcohol controls play a role as well. Led by a few global players, we are seeing a massive increase in alcohol-free beers. Where we once had only a single NA lager to quench our thirst, we now have a wide range of different styles, especially as smaller craft brewers embrace the challenge. This trend was clearly visible at the Brussels Beer Challenge. The **Best Dutch beer** in the competition was a low-alcohol beer: **Bird of Prey 0.2%** by **Uiltje Brewing Company**.

Tripel and Wheat Beer Remain Extremely Popular

We may be repeating ourselves, but the classic **Belgian Tripel** beers remain immensely popular, with nearly one hundred entries. Belgium claimed nearly all the medals in this category: **Tripel Lefort**, **888 Tripel Eight**, **Brugse Tripel**, and **Broeder Jacob Tripel**. The American Allagash took the last medal. Belgian wheat beer is also an extremely popular category, with 65 entries, a Belgian gold medal for '**St. Bernardus Wit**', and two Chinese podium places.

Diversity

Our society is becoming more diverse, and the beer world is no exception. During the first edition of the Brussels Beer Challenge, we received entries from 16 countries; in the most recent edition, beers came from no fewer than 39 countries (including a few surprising names like Lebanon, Turkey, India, Moldova, and Vietnam). The results of the competition were as international as the entries. For the first time in BBC history, beers from **Moldova and Paraguay** won medals. And that is something to be celebrated.



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