

# The RARE BEER CLUB

JOPEN B.V.  
HAARLEM, THE NETHERLANDS

## MEESTERSTUK 2025 (RARE BEER CLUB EXCLUSIVE)

From the 14th century onward, Haarlem flourished as a hub of brewing culture. Today, Jopen continues this legacy, crafting both historic and innovative beers in the heart of the city. Their brewery, housed in a beautifully restored church, serves as a pub, restaurant, and a testament to Haarlem’s rich brewing history.

Jopen’s story immediately captivated us, and their exceptional beers sealed the deal. One standout is the Jopen Koyt Gruitbier, a beer we’ve featured before, which dates back to at least 1407. During that time, Haarlem was a major brewing center, with its beers transported along the Spaarne River. However, this golden age of brewing came to an end when the city’s last brewery closed in 1916.



In the 1990s, the Haarlem Beer Society set out to revive this lost tradition, coinciding with Haarlem’s 750th anniversary. Using rediscovered recipes from 1407 and 1501, they recreated historic brews that proved to be exceptional. The first was Hoppen, based on a 1501

recipe, marking the beginning of what would become Jopen. Their official brewery, Jopenkerk, opened in November 2010 inside a former church, now home to a grand café, restaurant, and meeting spaces.

Beyond Jopen Koyt Gruitbier, the brewery continues to impress with a diverse lineup. Hoppenbier, a golden recreation of the hoppy 1501 recipe, stands out alongside Gerstebier, inspired by a 19th-century session-strength bitter ale. Ongelovige Thomas (Doubting Thomas) offers a bold, hoppy

quadrupel, while Malle Babbe brings a unique take on a hoppy wheat beer with weizen clove character and vibrant Saphir hops.

As one of our two featured Rare Beer Club selections this month, we’re excited to offer Jopen’s 2025 Meesterstuk Imperial Pastry Stout. This exclusive, limited-edition release builds on their renowned annual Meesterstuk line of Imperial Pastry Stouts and is brewed with barley, wheat, oats, vanilla, lactose, stroopwafels (“syrup-waffle” – a sort of thin waffle-like Dutch cookie), marshmallows, and hops. Available in the USA only through

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SPECIFICATIONS	
<b>Style</b>	Imperial Pastry Stout
<b>Alcohol By Volume</b>	11.11%
<b>Serving Temperature</b>	48–55° F
<b>Suggested Glassware</b>	Tulip, Globe Snifter, or Teku Glass

the Rare Beer Club.

For the latest from Jopen, visit their website at [jopenbier.nl](http://jopenbier.nl).

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## MEESTERSTUK 2025

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Jopen's Meesterstuk ("Masterpiece") 2025 is an Imperial Pastry Stout crafted to commemorate the brewery's 30th anniversary. The 11.11% ABV is a nod to St. Martin, the patron saint of the Haarlem Brewers Guild, whose feast day is November 11th – which is also the day Jopen celebrates their anniversary. Meesterstuk is brewed every year, with the recipe changing somewhat each time. Previous versions have included such special ingredients as blueberries, hazelnuts, milk chocolate, and cinnamon, and have been crafted to evoke the character of different types of desserts like seasalt caramel brownies or Mexican cake.

This year's rich and complex beer is brewed with barley, wheat, oats, vanilla, lactose, stroopwafels, and marshmallows, resulting in a multifaceted tasting experience. It pours a deep brown to jet black

in the center, characteristic of imperial stouts. The head retention is moderate, leaving sticky lacing on the glass. The nose is greeted with sweet notes of marshmallow and chocolate, accompanied by subtle hints of smokiness, reminiscent of a campfire setting. There are dominant notes of burnt sugar and buttery caramel from the stroopwafels with hints of vanilla and cinnamon, mirroring the classic stroopwafel filling. Underlying tones of dark chocolate, cocoa, and roasted coffee add complexity with other deep aromas of syrup-soaked waffles coming through when the brew warms up a bit.

The initial sip of Jopen Meesterstuk 2025 bursts with caramel, toffee, and vanilla, closely mimicking a fresh stroopwafel. Layers of bittersweet chocolate and espresso balance out any sugary elements that might seem too sweet. A mild cinnamon or nutmeg warmth, echoing the Dutch treat's subtle spice character, comes through with every sip. As an imperial stout, expect some warming alcohol presence; this one is at 11.11%, but it's not off putting, and actually comes on quite subtly. Despite its pastry stout sweetness,

a moderate bitterness from roasted malts and hops provides depth. The mouthfeel is creamy and smooth, attributed to the lactose and oats leaving a silky texture on the palate. The finish is long and decadent, with lingering notes of stroopwafel, marshmallows, and cocoa. A mild dryness from the roasted malts prevents the sweetness from being cloying. This stout is indulgence in a glass, combining the comforting flavors of stroopwafels with the rich, bold characteristics of an imperial stout. The Jopen Meesterstuk 2025 is a Rare Beer Club exclusive in very limited quantities, so stock up while you can.

### AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

The Jopen Meesterstuk 2025 drinks amazingly now and, per the brewery, can mature into 2044. Pairing this outstanding pastry stout with Oklahoma onion smash burgers, barbeque brisket, or smoky ribs is a great way to enjoy it – and don't forget the stroopwafels for dessert. Cheers!

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# The RARE BEER CLUB

## LAMBIEK FABRIEK SINT-PIETERS-LEEUEW, BELGIUM

### BRETT-ELLE

Founded in 2016 in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw, Belgium by two longtime friends, Lambiek Fabriek puts a contemporary spin on a classic style. Jo Panneels and Jozef Van Bosstraeten, who had known each other since childhood and had even worked together in Burgundy helping local winemakers with their annual grape harvests, started brewing lambic in 2006, experimenting with styles and ingredients in a converted garage. By 2015, they decided to open a commercial lambic brewery, with Jozef taking on the role of master brewer and Jo becoming the zythologist, assisting with



blending and taking on all non-production roles, from finance and accounting to sales and marketing. Their venture has been quite the success, with Lambiek Fabriek racking up numerous awards, including a slew of gold, silver, and bronze medals from the prestigious annual Brussels Beer Challenge.

While wine is well-known for the concept of “terroir” – a wine’s unique character reflecting the region in which it is produced – beer is not typically thought of in this way. However, lambic is perhaps the most prominent exception in the world of beer. This traditional Belgian style relies on

spontaneous fermentation using the wild yeasts in the air, creating beers that are unique to their birthplace and unlike anything produced elsewhere.

Lambiek Fabriek brews its lambic using a traditional recipe, which consists of approximately 35% wheat and 65% malted barley, along with aged pellet hops. The stainless steel coolship used at their Zuun location from 2016 to 2021 was locally made and split into two equal halves, each holding 1,200 liters, allowing a full brew to fill the entire coolship. The wort is pumped over at around 95°C and allowed to cool until it reaches about 22-23°C before being

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### SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Style</b>	Oude Geuze
<b>Alcohol By Volume</b>	6.3%
<b>Serving Temperature</b>	50–55° F
<b>Suggested Glassware</b>	Tulip or Teku Glass

transferred to barrels. Master brewer Jozef Van Bosstraeten, assisted by Jo Panneels with blending, ensures each bottling is 5,000 liters. Bottling is semi-automated in Ruisbroek, with a capacity of 1,300 bottles per hour, and the only manual labor involved is adding capsules to the bottles.

In addition to being the master brewer, Jozef Van Bosstraeten is also a cooper. Lambiek Fabriek values having an in-house cooper to maintain barrels and foeders, avoiding reliance on external help. Many of their French oak barrels are first-fill barrels sourced from the Burgundy region in France, where they have connections with local winemakers. As of 2022, the brewery owns around 210 barrels (180 x 400 liters and 30 x 220 liters) and 12 foeders, which were purchased from Italy and Austria, with ages ranging from 30 to 40 years. The smallest 8 foeders hold 47 hectoliters each, while one holds 65 hectoliters, and the largest 3 can contain 70 hectoliters each. The geuze is a blend of lambic aged in 400-liter barrels, while the fruit lambics combine lambic aged in both barrels (of various sizes) and foeders. Some barrels are labeled with a “B” to indicate that the lambic inside is made from organic grains. The 100% organic lambic is used in brews such as “Natur-Elle” and

“Organic & Wild Black-Belle.”

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## BRETT-ELLE

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We are tremendously excited to offer the Brett-Elle Oude Geuze from Lambiek Fabriek for the first time to our Rare Beer Clubs members. It is a blend of 1, 2, and 4 year old lambics, and is aged in oak barrels. The name derives from the wild *Brettanomyces* yeast used in its production.

Upon pouring, a pillowy white head forms that recedes but sticks around, almost like a pilsner head. The beer shows a golden straw color, with a haziness you expect from a lambic. The brett yeast is very evident in the smell, a funky barnyard scent that marks a well made naturally fermented lambic, but there’s also a sweet note to the scent, reminiscent of a freshly sliced nectarine.

The first sip of the Brett-Elle Oude Geuze presents a vivid, lemony tartness. As the beer warms up from cellar temperature, that tartness smooths out somewhat, but still delivers lemon, berry, green apple and some bright floral qualities. There’s a hint of bitterness in the long finish to balance out some of the fruitier notes. Despite being aged in fresh oak barrels,

wood notes are subtle across the entire tasting.

There’s a bright effervescence to this lambic, apparent from the initial pour, which makes the fruit elements pop and provides a fizzy and refreshing mouthfeel, a sunny day in a glass. It carries the complex and subtle flavors of this naturally fermented Oude Geuze all the way from the first sip to the last.

### AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

Lambiek Fabriek’s Brett-Elle would pair well with fresh fruit, a salad with arugula and raspberries, or even poached cod or turbot, with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprig of tarragon. Alternatively, you could pair this with a cheese board, with the rich *Brettanomyces* flavors perfectly aligning with a soft gouda or a terroir-forward alpine cheese. In any case, this is a beer to enjoy with food, a light lunch on a sunny Saturday out on your deck with the breeze blowing and your feet up. What better way to welcome spring?

Age this one upright (so the yeast can settle) in a cool, dark place, and drink it within the next two years to get the best experience from this outstanding Oude Geuze lambic.