

Beer World: Antwerp

Globetrotter ADRIAN BELL continues his mission to show Darlington drinkers that good beer can be enjoyed overseas, in our series on short-break destinations.



ANTWERP is just a two hour train ride from Schiphol, and the prices are a lot cheaper than in Brussels.

The everyday beer is, in contrast to most of the rest of Belgium, a top fermenting ale called De Koninck. If you ask for a 'bolleke' (a type of glass) you get a 25cl measure. A good place to drink is **Den Engel** or **Den Bengel**, adjacent bars on the Grote Markt main square. Or try **Pater's Vaetje**, next to the cathedral.

A good place during the day (it closes at 7pm, and on Thursdays) is the **Oud Arsenaal**, halfway between the station and the old town. The interior walls are covered in old beer advertisements, and the bottled rage includes beers from several small gueuze breweries. Gueuze (pr. 'gurz') is beer that is fermented naturally by wild yeasts and has an acquired (sour) taste. The frambozen (raspberry) and kriek (cherry) versions are tasty though and more balanced than the bigger brands which tend to be too sweet.

There is a modern brewpub in the city called **'t Pakhuis** (Warehouse) which brews a 5.1% Blond, a 5.5% Bruin and the 9.5% Nen Bangelijke. It is a bit of a walk from the Grote Markt but worth it.

Not as far from the Grote Markt is the **Kulminator**, reputedly the best bar in Europe (if not the world) with around 500 different beers, some of which you can choose by year of bottling. It is small and looks like a restaurant but they serve no food - there is just a very thick beer menu.

Other pubs worth a visit are the **Berenbak**, the **Waagstuk** and the **Highlander**, all to the NE of the Grote Markt. All serve a good range of Belgian beers, and the Berenbak does a good steak. See www.adrianbell.co.uk.



Den Engel
Oud Arsenaal

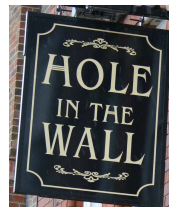
DETAILS, DETAILS:

Sights... include the Cathedral, the Zoo, Reubens's House, the Royal Museum, and for something different there is a pedestrian tunnel under the river. A site with information on what to visit is www.trabel.com/antwerp.htm. And don't forget the diamonds and chocolate.

Flights... from Durham Tees Valley to Schiphol start from £95 (www.klm.com) and trains to Antwerp from there cost 53 euro return (www.ns.nl or www.b-rail.be).

Accommodation... A good place is www.zeemanshuis.be (from 43.50 euro/nt single). Alternatives on www.bookings.com.

Your Best Guide... Good Beer Guide Belgium (2005), CAMRA, £12.99.



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