



A Taste of: Malheur 12° Quadrupel

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Quadrupel, Malheur 12°, Brouwerij De Landtsheer NV, Buggenhout, Belgium (12.0% alc)

The Belgians don't pussyfoot around with their beer. Not only is their country regarded as the Holy Grail for beer lovers, but they have a penchant for naming their beers with an ironic sense of danger that will draw a gasp from the most hardened nun.

Why name your beer "Adam's White Light IPA" when you came name it after the Devil (*Duvel*), *Lucifer*, *Satan* or after a brutally debilitating case of alcohol withdrawal that causes a physical onslaught (*Delirium Tremens*)? That's right, people, walk on the dark side with the Belgians! Ride the razor's edge to hell! Drink the devil's saliva!

With that in mind, I was introduced to a Belgian beer last week that seemed straight out of the Devil's lair, itself. Such wildly delicious flavors and such deceitful drinkability that it fully masked its high-alcohol pitchfork. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the *Malheur 12°*. Meaning "misfortunate" in Belgian, I'll be damned if it was. It was spectacular.

So, there my lady and I were having a bite at our local haunt, Sanfords, when we started geeking out on beer talk with Gus Karalekas. Now Gus and his brother, Chris, own the joint and they don't mess around. These have to be two of the savviest restaurant operators in Astoria and **they have one of the sickest, most value-driven beer and wine lists in the city. Their prices on everything from half bottles of vino to rare beer finds are mind-boggling.**

Gus is telling us about some of his latest beer finds, when out of nowhere, he gets a devilish glint in his eye. (You always know that moment when a beer geek talks about their latest liquid fascination...the breath quickens, the heart races and the gaze becomes fixed like a gargoyle). We knew he was up to something. He ducked away and came back with an unassuming bottle of Malheur 12° from Belgium.

Emanuel "Manu" De Landtsheer is the owner of Malheur brewery. He opened it in 1997, but only after it had been closed around World War II, and that after having been in his family for six generations. When his father passed in 1991, Emanuel followed his father's dream to reopen the brewery and restore it to its former greatness. And with it, he brought his own sense of experimentation.

The Malheur 12° is a Quadrupel style that takes its inspiration from the great Trappist brewers. As you may have guessed, its a souped-up, hot rod version that's bigger and badder than the Dubbel and the Trippel (its Belgian siblings). Clocking in at a whopping 12% alcohol, its a wolf in sheep's clothing because you don't suspect its power. Slightly sweet, it unfolds in unctuous layers. **With notes of Concord grapes rolled in Cocoa powder it will sneak up on you. Malty caramel flavors are reminiscent of a Snickers bar rolled up in grape jelly (just like the kids like it, you crazy demon you).**

If you're up for beers in Queens, come see me and we'll ride on Beelzebub's train to Sanford's front door where we'll be greeted by an imp wearing a red suit and offering a Malheur and a discount on souls (I hear they're quite in demand). Just keep your eyes on his pitchfork...they're a wily lot, themimps.