

# Beer

## Gets a *Makeover*

by Lulu Johnson

With an impressive six-year history, Beer Mania is a staple in the Beijing beer lover's community. Now, bar owner Thierry De Dobbelaar takes Beer Mania to the next level with a massive redesign, expansion and reinvention that will include new beers, food and of course an entirely redesigned structure.

The new Beer Mania, unveiled late June, features 50 meters of outdoor terrace seating, a foosball and pool table, big screen TVs and all the imported Belgian and international beer you can dream of. The bar has space for live music and events as well as additional seating, while the daily features were altered to highlight the new additions to the bar.





# What's New

"What I really try to make is a place where people meet each other. It's like what we have in Belgium, the most important piece in the establishment is the bar. Usually people go to the bar, talk to the staff, meet new people and make a network. That is what I've tried to reproduce at Beer Mania." According to Dobbelaar, the importance of meeting new people and networking is more important than the pool table, newly imported foosball table, brand-spanking new big screens, a computer juke box and amazing beer list. Bars are social gathering points where ideas are shared and communities blossom, but they are also lots of fun. Beer Mania hopes to achieve community and entertainment with high-quality beer all in one location.

"You know, I am from Belgium. Beer is part of our culture," says Dobbelaar, whose menu reads like a beer lover's dream. Imports from across Europe, Australia, USA and Asia are featured on the bottled beer list with the high-end tap options of Chimay Red and Strongbow, among others. For the newly expanded bar, the imported bottled beer section will feature roughly twenty new imports from across the globe that Dobbelaar says you'll have to come in to the new bar to experience for yourself.

With the increase in popularity of beer cocktails, Beer Mania also has an impressive twenty mixes on the menu. "You have two kinds of beer cocktails," Dobbelaar explains. "The first is when you do a cocktail and you replace one ingredient with beer, usually the soft drink. The second kind is mixed with only beers."

The Porch Crawler is one of the more dangerous and addictive of the former types of beer cocktails on the menu, and combines Stella Artois, Vodka and lemon juice. "You don't taste the alcohol so you get drunk



quite fast," Dobbelaar quips. The Pêche Melbush is an example of the latter; a cocktail invented by a Belgian student, it combines Lindeman's, a low alcohol beer that is sweet and tasty, with a high alcohol Bush beer, which results in a sweet, strong and tasty beer cocktail that is easy to drink.

Along with beer cocktails, Dobbelaar hopes to attract new clientele with his imported French wine menu. "We will start with four wines by La Caumette, a vineyard in the south of France," but the wine menu will expand and grow according to client's wishes. Although a beer fan himself, Dobbelaar shrugs when he says that he knows beer isn't for everyone.

Beer Mania doesn't just sell beer—it sells Belgium. The establishment boasts an impressive assortment of Belgian snacks to complete the picture. With Belgian chocolate made with his great grandfather's recipe, Dobbelaar brings quite literally an authentic taste of home to Beijing. The chocolate bars come in white, milk and dark chocolate hazelnut praline and sell for 30rmb, a steal once you've tried a morsel of this amazingly seductive treat.

Chocolate isn't the only Belgian import at Beer Mania. A Belgian ice cream selection will be featured in the new menu and will include ice cream-based cakes in a variety of flavors. Belgian waffles, made on site, are also on offer, as is an impressive organic Dutch cheese. "You know, in Belgium when you get a good beer they give you a small pot of cubes of cheese. It's what you have to eat with good beer," says Dobbelaar.



# Specials

In the spirit of community, Beer Mania offers a range of daily specials, events and a noteworthy happy hour daily from 2-8pm of 20-25% off.

**Monday:** Foosball tournament night. A newly imported French foosball table, sponsored by Chimay and Hoegaarden, will witness many Monday nights of gaming, including a tournament at the end of the year. Prizes will be awarded by the sponsors weekly.

**Tuesday:** To build awareness and help the community, Beer Mania hosts a 'Drink for Charity' event the third Tuesday of every month wherein 10rmb of each drink goes directly to those in need. Charities change monthly, and the donation box is always available.

**Wednesday:** The Hutong school community heads to Beer Mania midweek to drink, chat and meet new people. Cheap local Beijing drafts and 20rmb mixed drinks are on special as well as a discount on restaurant delivery food.

**Thursday:** Ladies night! Free general mixed drinks for the girls between 8pm-midnight.

**Saturday & Sunday:** Live music and a relaxed environment for playing cards.



*The new Beer Mania will be opening in mid-late June at Taiyue Suites, Floor 1. #16 Sanlitun South Street. Contact: 6500-0559.*