

# Hello everyone

It's hard to believe that a whole year has flown by in the blink of an eye. Time truly does have a way of escaping us when we are surrounded by amazing people and great craft beer.

For those who haven't had the chance to meet me yet, my name is Martin Vahtra, and I am the head brewer here at Põhjala. I have been fortunate enough to work in the craft beer industry for more than 8 years now, and I am proud to say that 5 of those have been spent with this company. The whole team and I are eager to give you a behind the scenes look into the year ahead of us, as we have an array of exciting projects and ventures lined up, including new unique brews, novel collaborations and several special events.

As per tradition, the year kicks off with a celebration of Baltic Porter Day, which is held on the 20th of January of 2024. For this occasion, we have a special release lined up for you called **Baltic Porter Day 2024**, which is an indulgent example of the style made with plenty of malted rye and dried coffee cherries for subtle notes of dried dark fruits, toasty bread crust and a touch of warming spices.

Speaking of celebrations, we are releasing a limited edition double IPA in springtime, which is brewed to celebrate a decade since the first release of Virmalised, our iconic West Coast IPA inspired by the ethereal beauty of the Northern Lights. **Virmalised X** takes everything you adore about the modern classic, and elevates it to unprecedented heights.

We have recently taken an initiative to start sourcing barrels directly from distillers and other producers for our esteemed Cellar Series releases. This direct sourcing approach not only ensures that we get freshly emptied barrels each time, but also assures a higher quality standard, and enhances the barrel character that we're after at the end of the day. The first release of many to utilise this new direction is **Rudolf**, a massive ryewine aged in Finnish rye whisky barrels.

Sourcing ingredients from our surroundings is a practice very much close to our hearts here at Põhjala. Not only does it promote sustainability, but it also gives us an opportunity to showcase flavour expressions which are very much unique to our area. We are thrilled to bring you releases such as **Kodu**, an imperial Baltic porter brewed with locally malted rye, **Kõu**, an imperial gose brewed with honeyberries and heather honey, and **Pirniraks**, a pear sour ale brewed with an abundance of sun-kissed Baltic pears, among many others you can look forward to this coming year.

We hope that you can join us for the next **Tallinn Craft Beer Weekend**, which is held between 14–15 of June. It's the biggest international craft beer festival in the Baltic region with participating breweries, cideries and even mead producers from all over the world. Note that the festival is now held in June, so festival-goers can enjoy warmer temperatures and make the most out of seemingly ever-lasting days, as the sun here in Estonia takes its sweet time to set during the summer months.

We strongly believe in the power of feedback and insights from our partners, as we continually strive to enhance our products. As a result of the latest outreach efforts, we have made some minor upgrades to many of our sour ales, including Sun City, Prenzlauer Berg, Prenzlauer O and Orange Gose, which are now softer, and have a higher fruit content and a deeper flavour expression than before. Additionally, our flagship session IPA Uus Maailm is going to become gluten free in coming months — it still tastes just as refreshing, zesty and hoppy as before, with the added benefit of now being an option for a wider audience.

We are wholeheartedly committed to continuing the legacy of Põhjala, which has been established over the past decade, and cannot wait to get back on the road to share stories with you, and raise a glass together in celebration of our shared love for this industry. Here's to another year filled with great brews and unforgettable moments!

Cheers,  
Martin Vahtra

