

Beer news

New year, new beer

It's a brand new year, so why not resolve to try some new brews? GREG THOM has some suggestions

Icon ZIPA
NSW craft brewer Murray's has created what it claims is the "hoppiest" beer in the southern hemisphere.

An award-winning, limited-release categorised by the brewers as an "extreme" brew, Icon Imperial Indian Pale Ale is a hybrid of Imperial and American IPA beer styles.

At 7.5 per cent alcohol and with the intense hopping imbuing, ZIPA has a strong citrus character and is not a beer for the faint-hearted.

Those who take the plunge will be rewarded with a complex and interesting brew. It tantalises the tastebuds with a wonderful mix of sensations that range from peppery to passionfruit.

www.murraysbrewing.com.au



Feral White
This unfiltered Belgian-style witbier, which hails from WA, was awarded Champion Specialty Beer at the 2007 Australian International Beer Awards and it's easy to see why. With a beautiful Hoegaarden-like cloudiness, the 4.5 per cent drop rewards drinkers with a wonderfully citrus taste bordering on the spicy, courtesy of a hint of orange peel and cracked coriander seeds. More like a refreshing tonic than a beer.

www.feralbrewing.com.au

Crackback Pale Ale
The flagship beer from Snowy Mountains Brewery, Crackback is a delicate, 4.9 per cent pale ale tailor-made for Australian palates.

Named after the mountain range in the Kosciuszko National Park, Crackback makes use of a great combination of Chinook hops to achieve a "soft" bitterness and Amarillo and Cascade hops for slightly spicy flavour. It's a fruity, medium-bodied drop that's best described as delicious.

www.snowymountainsbrewery.com.au



Otaru Export
The importers of Otaru went to great lengths to source this unusual beer from a remote Japanese fishing village of the same name.

The beer is the first to be imported by Boutique Alpine Brews, a new venture established to put niche beers from alpine regions around the world in the hands of Australian drinkers.

A European-inspired, pilsener style, the 5 per cent Otaru Export was originally developed for distribution from the village brewery to nearby Tokyo and has previously been unavailable outside Japan.

Using local water considered by centuries of seafarers to be the purest of any port in Japan, this beautiful beer has a highly distinctive aroma and a taste that conjures images of pear and almonds. Email: brews@boutiquealpinebrews.com.au

that pours with a glorious creamy head, London Best is a well-balanced, easy-drinking English bitter with a slight bite.

www.gageroads.com.au



Quaffing

WINE > Advice and reviews from PADDY KENDLER

> LESS THAN \$15

4.5 **Dividing Range Shiraz Cabernet 2006, \$9.50**
I rated this red blend the best of a new range produced by the Victorian Alps Winery at Gapsted. It's not overly rich or complex, but features attractive berry and cherry aromas and flavours laced with a shot of black pepper. Some may well prefer the cabernet merlot under the same label, a pleasant and approachable wine, to be sure. Why not try both?

3.5 **Commissioners Block Pinot Grigio 2007, \$12.50**
This is not the best pinot grigio on the market — I'm starting to doubt there is such a wine — but it's a decent dry white showing hints of pear and melon flavours within a fresh, clean palate. Compared with many of its varietal rivals, the Commissioners from Ilymple on the Murray is at least priced in approximate relation to its quality.

> LESS THAN \$20

4 **Hamelin Bay Rampant White 2007, \$17.50**
An interesting and engaging dry-white blend from Margaret River, holding good depth of flavour and smooth texture. Take a sip then ponder. Various fruits and a little dried grass may be sensed. Better still, just quaff away and enjoy.

> LESS THAN \$25

5 **Baileys of Glenrowan Founder Liqueur Tokay, \$21**
All credit to Foster's and site manager Paul Dahlenburg for not only maintaining this historic property but improving it. Baileys now caters very well for winery tourists and the current wines are very good to excellent. The Founder Tokay is quite simply delicious with its floral, tea-leaf and malt aromas and flavours, succulent and unctuous texture and long, lingering finish. A steal at the price.

5 **Thorn-Clarke Shofire Shiraz 2006, \$23**
A truly lovely Barossa shiraz, rich and full, but not overpowering, well balanced, very satisfying and better than many at twice the price. The winery's Bordeaux blend entitled Quarage is similarly impressive. Track these down, pull out the cash and don't look back.

Read more of Paddy's wine tips at www.wineoutlaw.com.au

- 5 Unbeatable
 - 4 Fine drop
 - 3 Good value
 - 2 Thirsty? OK
 - 1 Don't bother
- *Wines rated within price category



PADDY KENDLER'S wish list for 2008

● Is it too much to expect our producers of pinot gris/grigio to accept they are making what is no more than experimental wine from immature vines and price them accordingly, instead of line-pricing them with their more established varietals?

● I hope many wine-lovers take the time to visit Rutherglen and surrounds this year. To my mind, it's the most under-rated region in Australia and not just for the gorgeous muscats and tokays. The reds are better than ever and the whites — often made from Rhone varieties such as viognier and mairisane — are more than pleasant surprises.

● The clumsiest, most off-putting varietal name in Australian wine must be unoaked/unwooded chardonnay. Given that chardy comes in so many forms, from the unoaked through the barely oaked to the thoroughly wooded, and from old barrels to all-new wood, could we just drop the

ugly prefix from the name and indicate on the back label what to expect?

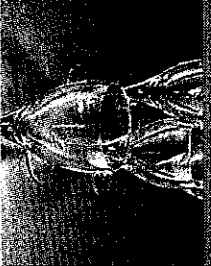
● Let's hope the winemakers of the King Valley have a much more bountiful vintage in 2008 than last year, when they were devastated by drought, fire and frost.

This region is one of the nurseries of new and exciting grape varieties that can be expected to play a key role in our nation's wine future.

● Let Tasmanian wine surprise and seduce you this year. The progress of the past few years has been amazing, particularly with riesling and pinot noir. Move over Clare and Eden valleys? Well, perhaps not just yet, but watch out Croweaters.

● Cabernet sauvignon is due for a return to favour and so it should be. A growing number of winemakers are producing a version that is more drinkable upon release than the traditionally astringent style, which takes time to mellow. There are signs the Aussie blend of cabernet and shiraz is also making a comeback.

Win wine



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A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT