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**BREW**

# Crafty operator

Redoak Brewery, barely four years in operation, adds to its swag of gongs, writes **Willie Simpson**.

REDOAK Brewery was the star local entrant at the 2008 Australian International Beer Awards, carrying off the trophy for champion small brewery. Having won the coveted grand champion beer gong in 2006 with its Redoak Special Reserve and a swag of medals at various competitions, the family-run craft brewery can claim to be one of the country's most-awarded – and that is in barely four years of operation.

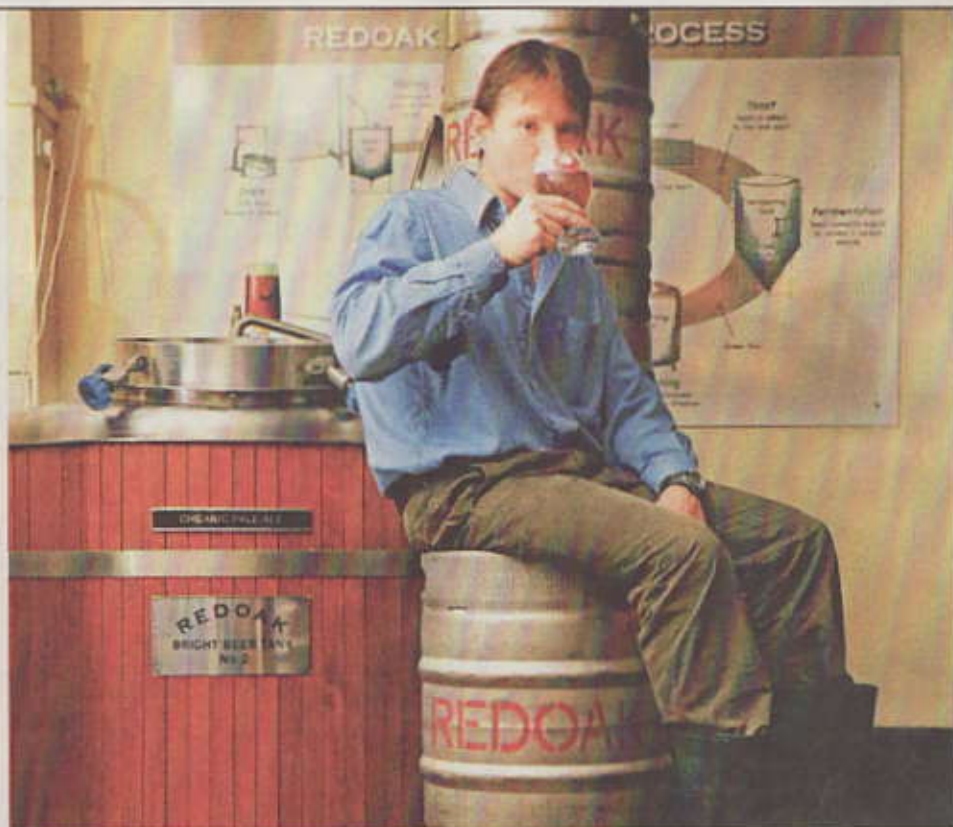
The grand champion beer trophy wasn't presented this year and has been replaced by a piece of silverware for the highest-scoring brewery, won by the Matilda Bay Brewing Company. In a rather confusing division of interests, the latter entered its flagship trio comprising Bohemian Pilsner, Redback and Redback Mild, while its other brands, produced at the Matilda Bay Garage Brewery in Victoria, were entered under that label in the small brewery section.

Gold medals were noticeably thin on the ground this year but the Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel received a top medal for

Broadside 200, a robustly strong Belgian-style abbey ale, rolled out two years ago to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Surviving kegs of the one-off batch have been quietly maturing in the pub's cellars and the judges evidently believe it is getting considerably better with age. It snared gold this year but in 2007 failed to win a medal of any colour. The long-running brew-pub also enjoyed success with its Old Admiral strong ale, which scored a silver medal.

Tooheys won gold medals for Hahn Premium and Tooheys Extra Dry but its craft beer interests also stood up well with James Squire Brewhouse at King Street Wharf winning gold for its Highwayman house ale.

Among the NSW breweries to win multiple silver medals were the Schwartz Brewery, Paddy's Brewery, Snowy Mountains Brewery and Port Macquarie's Little Brewing Company, a relative newcomer, which gained a pair of silvers for its Wicked Elf Pilsner and Pale Ale.



Winning drop ... David Hollyoak of Redoak. Photo: Marco Del Grande

## 2008 AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL BEER AWARDS

**Champion Small Brewery** Redoak, NSW.

**NSW gold medal winners** Hahn Premium – Tooheys Brewery (Australian Style Lager, packaged); Tooheys Extra Dry – Tooheys Brewery (Australian Style Lager, draught); Highwayman – James Squire Brewhouse (draught ale); Redoak Special Strong Bitter – Redoak Brewery (draught ale); Broadside 200 – Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel (Belgian- and French-style draught ale).