

beer

Labour of love



with **Rory Gibson**

BEHIND every successful man there's a woman driving him, so the saying goes.

In the case of Redoak Brewery founder Dave Hollyoak, it was his determination to reconcile his love for a good woman and his passion for quality beer that led him to the point where he is today, churning out award-winning boutique ales.

It's an inspiring tale, about a boy who kept the girl *and* his beer, and ended up with a new career.

Hollyoak, now 33, was a builder, originally from Brisbane (his parents live in the western suburbs) who was living with his Belgian girlfriend in Sydney.

He had been a home-brewer since the age of 14, cutting his teeth on ginger beer and progressing to the hard stuff to the point where he was pretty good at it.

They were a happy couple, except for one sticking point: Karen got a bit narky about her home being over-run with brewing stuff. She suggested Dave take up television as a hobby like normal boyfriends.

Dave went on the offensive. He knew that in Belgium, Karen was fond of a particular brew, so he set out to make it for her.

It was a raspberry wheat beer, and the first Redoak Framboise Froment was born. His strategy worked a treat — not

only was he allowed to keep brewing, he married Karen.

He had always wanted to take his beer to a wider audience, so with his new wife's blessing, he stopped building and started a brewery in Camden outside Sydney two years ago.

Seven months later he opened the Redoak Boutique Beer Cafe, in Clarence St in Sydney's CBD, which for the first year was the only place you could get your hands on a Redoak beer.

Slowly the Redoak brews are creeping out into the wider world, fuelled by demand generated by a string of awards.

I mentioned last week that it had picked up two awards at the recent Australian Hotel Beer Awards — the Organic Hefeweizen took out Champion Wheat Beer and the Christmas Cheer took out Champion Specialty Beer.

Redoak was the most awarded microbrewery at last year's Australian International Beer Awards, winning four Best in Class and 14 medals.

This year it was the most awarded brewery outright, winning five Best in Class and 30 medals.

Hollyoak has 36 beer styles in his armoury, and they read like a food group in their own right: Blackberry Hefeweizen, Vienna Lager, Bavarian Pilsener, the Framboise Froment, Oatmeal Stout, Böck, Belgium Choc-Cherry Stout. That's just a few of the award winners.

The cafe, designed to showcase the beer with gourmet food, is run by



Hollyoak's sister Janet, and there's usually about 16 beer styles on offer.

But how do Queenslanders get hold of what is technically a Queensland beer, if you apply State of Origin rules?

"Until now the Spotted Cow Hotel in Toowoomba was the only place that you could get it in Queensland," Hollyoak said.

"But the Liquor Barn at the Paddington Tavern in Brisbane has just agreed to stock it, and I'm talking to some other potential distributors."

It can be ordered through the Redoak website at www.redoak.com.au or fax: 02 9262 3304.

gibsonr@qnp.newsltd.com.au

NEW brew . . . Dave Hollyoak, above, with sister Janet, has opened a signature cafe in the Sydney CBD serving his Redoak beer, below.

