

**GOURMET**

Beer and Coffee

# BREWING WITH BEER

Coffee and beer are two of Australia's favourite drinks. As **Matt Kirkegaard** discovers they don't need to be drunk at the opposite ends of the day.

**I**N ANSWERING the question "what to pair with coffee at the dining table", dessert readily springs to mind; there are any number of sweet treats that can be enjoyed with good coffee.

As for drinks, the matching of coffee and port is a classic way to end a meal, as is coffee and a fine liqueur. While these are all great matches, the inquisitive gourmet's ongoing search for new taste partners is turning up some surprises. Discerning diners are discovering that beer can be the perfect accompaniment to coffee, and it can sit just as nicely with a dessert.

For those Australians, who only equate 'beer' with the pale amber fluid that comes in a can labelled Tooheys, VB or XXXX, the suggestion that beer and coffee should be drunk together might bring on scornful looks.

But just as the majority of Australians once thought good coffee came in a jar, they are now discovering that there is a world of beer out there, and it is a world worth discovering.

Sydney's Redoak Boutique Beer Café is an Australian leader in the quest for great beer and food matches and for head brewer Dave Hollyoak their ability to find a beer to match their menu — including coffee — is a source of pride. Hollyoak says the key to

good matches is understanding which tastes compliment each other and which contrast.

"I think matching beer to dessert is one of our specialties," he says.

"If you are having something sweet for dessert you want something to contrast with that and so you go with something quite dry to cleanse the palate.

Dave says coffee goes well with sweet desserts because it's a classic bitter/sweet combination. He says that in matching beers to coffee you are looking for the same combination.

"This is where beer can work with dessert, because beer can have bitterness and nice strong coffee flavours that really contrast with that sweetness."

"On the other hand, when you match beer to coffee, coffee already has the bitter component so you want to go with something sweet.

"For that we match something like our Special Strong Ale, the Wee Heavy Ale, the Bock or the Baltic Porter. They all have quite a bit of residual sweetness coming from the malt and that would provide the sweet component that would contrast with coffee's bitterness," Dave says.

Redoak's Wee Heavy Ale is a prime example of Dave's passion for making beer. He uses a peat-smoked malt, specially imported from

McCallans Distillery in Scotland, giving the Wee Heavy a smokiness reminiscent of a fine whiskey. With an alcohol content of 8 per cent, it is a rich and malty sweet ale that pairs beautifully with coffee to celebrate the end of a meal.

So seriously do Redoak take their coffee that they searched very hard for a coffee roaster that matched their approach before settling on Sydney coffee house La Casa del Caffè.

La Casa's General Manager Louise Kennedy says that apart from enjoying a beer at the café on occasion, she has enjoyed working with Redoak on their coffee needs.

"Beer and coffee are a great combination, depending on how each is made they can both be bitter or sweet, which go very well together," Louise said.

Louise said that La Casa has provided a variety of coffee blends designed to provide Redoak with a range of flavours to help him get the beer right.

"Obviously different coffee blends will give you different things. Robusta will give you more body and crema, while arabica tends to be milder, so we are helping him out with a few flavour ideas."

So next time you're reaching for the port to go with your coffee, stop and have another look at the menu. It may be that the taste you are after is on the beer list, not the wine... ☐



# REDOAK'S BEER & COFFEE MATCHES

## Short black matched to Redoak Belgian Chocolate Stout

The Belgian Chocolate Stout is a unique speciality beer that sees Redoak's rich, smooth oatmeal stout infused with the finest Belgian chocolate, giving a full-bodied and irresistible bittersweet flavour with a rich chocolate aroma. The short black masks the coffee roasted flavours of the Chocolate Stout, but at the same time highlight the rich Belgian chocolate flavour and slight sweetness in the beer, which in turn highlights the bitterness of the coffee.

## Black mocha matched to Wee Heavy Ale

In this case the black mocha consisted of a double short black with a layer of hot chocolate over it. In tasting the Wee Heavy first you taste the peatiness nicely balanced to the beer's high alcohol. When tasted with the coffee, impression of the Wee heavy changes, giving it a liqueur flavour, emphasising the sweet malt. In turn the beer emphasised the chocolate flavour of the black mocha.

A great match! ☑



STOP PRESS!

## Coffee beers

While coffee and beer may go nicely side by side, some brewers are finding that they mix very well in the brew kettle too. Coffee beers are so well established that the bi-annual World Beer Cup even has a category devoted to them, won in 2006 by the UK's Meantime Brewing.

Matilda Bay was the first Australian Brewery to launch a coffee beer with their Crema last year.

A product of self-confessed caffeine addict Brad Rogers who installed his very own coffee roaster at the Matilda Bay Garage Brewery. Not content with just perfecting his morning espresso he decided it was time to create a coffee flavoured beer, using his own hand roasted beans.

Confounding expectations for what a coffee beer would look like, Crema had a light straw colour and a very creamy mouthfeel and while definitely not a seasonal beer, it proved that beer and coffee definitely do go together.

If you want to try coffee and beer for yourself, Redoak's Belgian Chocolate Stout is now selling nationally through Vintage Cellars, together with Redoak's Organic Hefeweizen, Organic Pale Ale and Honey Ale.

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