

COUNTER CULTURE

renaissance of the ry general store

price
ght, p4

Fragrant
Malaysian, p5

Beer of
the year, p16



The Alpha grail

The 2008 Royal Agricultural Society NSW Beer Competition was judged last week, attracting 100 entries, with the majority coming from NSW and WA craft breweries. The Fosters Group, Cooper's Brewery and Lion Nathan were noticeable absentees although the Matilda Bay Brewing Company (owned by Fosters) entered its range of beers and carried off the Champion Beer

trophy for its Alpha Pale Ale; somewhat ironically, Matilda Bay head brewer Brad Rogers recently announced that he is leaving the company after 15 years. Overall, six gold medals and 21 silvers were awarded, with both Matilda Bay and

NSW's Redoak Brewery being multi-award winners. Not only were Lion Nathan's mainstream brands such as Tooheys and XXXX not entered but two other brewers that entered last year's inaugural competition, Malt Shovel (James Squire beers) and Little Creatures (part-owned by Lion Nathan), also failed to front up this year. It's disappointing that our larger breweries chose not to support the RAS competition, particularly as its judging panel is scrupulously independent (judges cannot be employed by any companies that are associated in any way with entered beers). It avoids suggestions of vested interests made about other beer competitions where judges end up evaluating their own products.

GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

- Matilda Bay Alpha Pale Ale (WA) (2008 Champion Beer)
- Redoak Special Reserve (NSW)
- Redoak Special Strong Bitter (NSW)
- Murray's Grand Cru (NSW)
- Nail Stout (WA)
- Wicked Elf Pale Ale (NSW)

