

drinks



winter
BEERS & ALES

Go for bolder brews, says Greg Duncan Powell.

Sipping & spitting State of origin is a valid concept for football, but should it apply to drinking? State borders used to be clearly marked by beer brands – XXXX in Queensland, Tooheys and Reschs in NSW and CUB products in Victoria. Brewery buyouts have seen that go the way of the Berlin Wall. But there's still some state-based wine parochialism going on. South Australians are notoriously loyal to their shiraz, you rarely find Victorians drinking Hunter Valley semillon, and Western Australians adore their homegrown sem sav. Supporting local industries is all very well, but why restrict your wine choice because of where you live? Every wine-making state has something to offer the vast Australian wine list – even Queensland. We are, after all, a federation. Taste the states. Visit gregduncanpowell.com.au. *Greg*

When the weather is less than clement, beer isn't the first beverage to come to mind. That's because in our lager-saturated consciousness, we don't naturally gravitate towards a hearty ale or dark lager. But we should. Stronger, tastier beers go fantastically with cool-weather food: pies, curries and all. Here are four beers and ales that are ideal for winter imbibing.

- * **James Squire Nine Tales Amber Ale, \$20 (six pack)** One of the favourites of the Squire range, it has had a rebranding, but the beer remains the same food-friendly style. Earthy, with a good balance of fresh hops and roasted malt, it pairs well with salt and pepper squid.
- * **Guinness Black Lager, \$18 (six pack)** This fully imported brew is being trialled in Western Australia

before (fingers crossed) possible Australia-wide release. It looks great in the glass, but the balance is what most impresses. There's just the right amount of chocolate/mocha, while it's still light on its feet.

- * **Gage Roads Sleeping Giant IPA, \$19 (six pack)** This pale ale is not shy, with 5.4 per cent alcohol and no shortage of zesty, tangy hopping. There's enough weight to carry the hopping and the beer has the cut and thrust for strongly flavoured food – even pickles and liberally vinegared fish and chips.
- * **Snowy Mountains Brewery Razorback Red Ale, \$17 (six pack)** The beer is the colour of fine engine oil and has a whiff of freshly baked sourdough backed by tangy, citrusy hopping. It's not a heavy ale and would be a good choice with fish pie.

pop the cork

With the Cellar Key, a free digital resource, you can zap a code on a bottle of wine with your phone and access quantities of information that a label can never provide. The only downside is that it's currently limited to a few select wines. *Details, getcellarkey.com.au.*



Did you know? In the past 20 years, Aussie beer consumption has slumped, while wine-drinking has risen. Looks like wine will soon overtake beer as our national drink.

Greg takes the guesswork out of wine matching for some of our favourite dishes this issue



Fragrant mussels in coconut & lemongrass broth 2010 Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc, \$20



Fish tagine with figs & spices 2010 Scorpio Pinot Gris, \$35



Turkey & celeriac mash pot pies Cono Sur Reserva Pinot Noir, \$20



Steak with asparagus & green chilli aioli 2008 Blue Pyrenees Shiraz, \$20



Broccoli & pecorino pasta 2010 Pitchfork Pink, \$17