



beer

text Anthony Williams main image Darryl Peroni

As the seasons change and the temperatures drop, so does the appeal of the ice-cold and refreshingly bitter lagers that are a thirst-quenching staple during WA's warmer months. How about cuddling up in front of an open fire with that flagship of winter beers, the hearty stout?

scream and stout

some australians still regard refreshingly cold lager as the first and final word in beer. But just as you might reach for a red wine or a port when retreating from the grey days and chilly evenings ahead, you should also keep the darkest of brews in mind.

Guinness is undoubtedly the most recognised and best-selling of the stouts, brewed in 50, and sold in 150, countries (with an 80 per cent share of the global stout market). According to Guinness statistics, 10 million pints of the product are consumed around the world every day, with Australia being one of the company's fastest growing markets.

Guinness has come a long way from its humble beginnings. In 1759, Irishman Arthur Guinness took out a 9000-year lease on a Dublin brewery and began producing his version of Porter, a popular London beer at the time. Described by the Inchant Brewing Company's Ian Jeffrey as "the great granddaddy of the stouts", Porter is believed to have been invented in 1722 by Ralph Harwood as a replacement for a three-beer blend that became popular amongst the porters at London's produce

markets. Using the standard beer ingredients of water, hops, yeast and barley (roasted and also malted), and a secret Guinness extract, Arthur was exporting his stronger "stout porter" back to England within 10 years of his first brew. And while the name "porter" faded, as did the beer's popularity, little has changed for the distinguished Irish drop since then.

"The roasted barley and the yeast play a big role in creating that unique Guinness flavour," Guinness Australasia brewer Sue Diamond says.

"The yeast basically fingerprints your beer, [and] in the case of Guinness, the yeast is provided by Guinness Dublin... they send out pure cultures periodically, which we then propagate up for use in Australia.

"The hops produce bitterness and Guinness is hopped at a much higher rate than normal beer, [while] the roasted barley gives Guinness its colours as well as that famous roasty, chocolatey flavour."

Sue also notes that the key to the Guinness flavour profile is the secret Guinness extract which is produced at the St James' Gate brewery in Dublin and sent to the rest of the world. "This is Guinness'

secret herbs and spices," she says, "and only a few people know exactly what's in it."

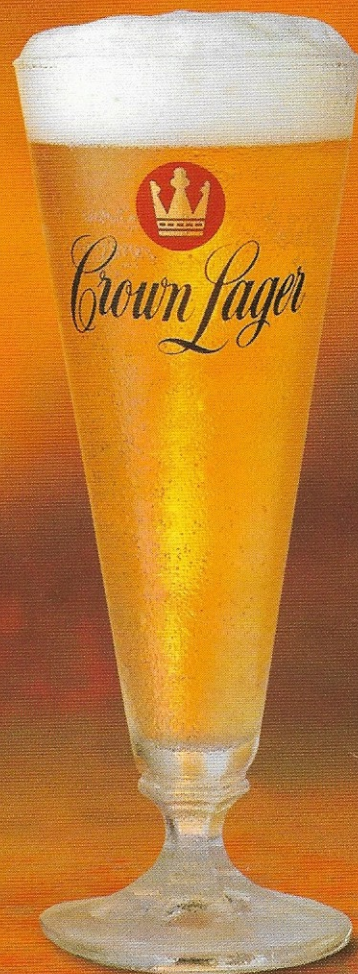
Whatever secrets the hearty brew holds (including scientifically proven properties which can help reduce cataracts in the eyes of the elderly and hardening of the arteries), Guinness has certainly made its presence felt since being introduced to Australia in 1869. The original beer recipe – which is still used to produce the Guinness Original (six per cent alcohol by volume) – was first prepared by South Australian Breweries in 1964, while Draught Guinness (4.2 per cent) arrived here in 1976 and was first brewed by Toohey's two years later.

Now brewed under Carlton United's control, the Draught Guinness was at first designed to be more suitable to Australian beer drinkers' tastes, Sue explains. "That recipe was different to the Irish recipe; it was a slightly stronger tasting stout.

"[But] last year, after extensive market research, Guinness Australasia decided to change the recipe so that it would be the same in Australia as in Ireland."

Also offering an authentic, floating-widget/gas-assisted taste of traditional Irish stout brewing are

Australia's Finest



**"GUINNESS PRETTY MUCH RULES THE WORLD
IN THE STOUT CATEGORY."**



the Murphy's and Beamish Black Irish Stouts, both somewhat smoother, or less bitter, than Guinness. The latter is distinctively brewed using malted wheat and barley and is produced exclusively by the Beamish Brewery in County Cork (established in 1792 and once the biggest brewery in Ireland). Murphy's stout hails from the same part of the emerald isle; the Lady's Well Brewery started operations in 1856 with James J Murphy and three of his brothers at the helm. Heineken took control of the company in 1983 and, according to export director Bob Kennefick, Murphy's has grown to acquire about 18 per cent of the Irish beer market.

"Everything in Ireland is a brand call, and that includes all beers and all whiskeys," Bob explains. "In other words, [people] won't ask for an Irish whiskey. They'll specify a brand [and] they'll specify

a brand in stout.

"A lot of it is where you grew up. Cork is on the south coast, so it's a smaller market share – Cork has 180,000 people and Dublin has over a million – [but] it's also very susceptible to advertising."

Bob says the Murphy Brewery aims its product promotion at the younger Irish drinker and is particularly protective of its Cork (and Munster, the province in which Cork is situated) market share. He also reveals that lager has, only in the past year, replaced stout as the dominant beer in Ireland – a fact that perhaps wouldn't sit well with the country's older, stout-drinking "laderans".

"The definition of a laderan is a guy who never comes home the same day he goes out," Bob says, admitting to being one himself. "I go to a pub to watch football games on television, because that's

where it happens — it's a social thing.

"When I go back from here, I live in a little village and I immediately head for the pub. I say "hello" to my wife and I head for the pub, because I've got to get filled in on all that's happening. The local pub is still the meeting place."

A romantic notion to be sure, to be sure. But Australia, and WA itself, also has a range of quality stout beers that should definitely be considered as winter alternatives. From Tasmania comes Cascade Special Stout, while South Australia's Coopers Brewery produces the award-winning Best Extra Stout and this state's Swan Brewery has the Swan Stout.

Sydney's Malt Shovel Brewery created a recent arrival on the WA beer market – the James Squire Porter. According to Chuck Hahn, master brewer at Malt Shovel and the man behind Hahn Premium, the James Squire Porter is similar to the British style of beer James Squire (a convict on the First Fleet and Australia's first brewer) was creating way back in 1795.

"Some people say it's sort of halfway between an amber ale and a stout," Chuck explains when asked about porter's classic characteristics.

"It's not as chewy as a stout, and it's not as clean-finishing, or as smooth, as an amber ale."

BEST KEPT SECRET.



IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.

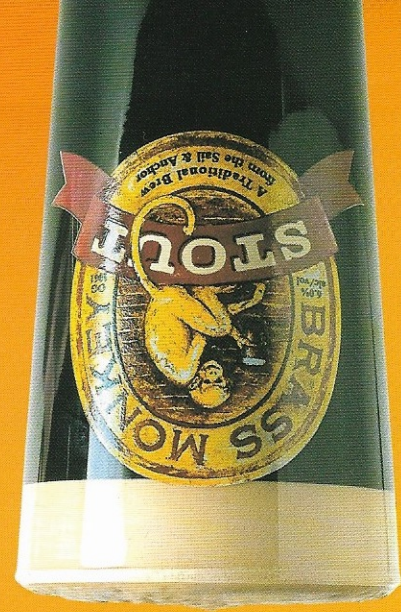
Chuck says the lager yeast used gives the award-winning James Squire Porter a slightly drier finish than a dark ale, while five different types of malt create chocolate and roasted coffee flavours without the smoky, burnt characteristics of a stout.

"Guinness pretty much rules the world in the stout category," he adds, "but this is quite a refreshing alternative to Guinness and I think that's where we're getting a lot of our drinkers from."

Which is perhaps also where local micro-brewer the Inchant Brewing Company is attracting custom from for its Guildford Porter. A beer director and brew master Ian Jeffrey describes as a "talking beer" (one look at the tasting notes will tell you why!), the Guildford Porter placed first, ahead of Guinness, in an Adelaide newspaper's taste test comparison last

year. The Fremantle landmark that is the Sail & Anchor Pub Brewery hand-crafts the full-bodied Brass Monkey Stout, while the Swan Valley's Duckstein Brewery will be varying a range of three stouts – Duckstout, Butterscotch Stout, and Imperial Stout (at a whopping 10 per cent alcohol by volume) – throughout the winter months.

In rural WA, the Bootleg Brewery (in Willyabrup near Margaret River) has a stout in its range, as has the Broome Brewery, with its (planned at the time of writing) Irish Stout. There's even the ABC Extra Stout, which is imported from Singapore. So wherever you find yourself during these coldest months when the chill begins to bite, spend a little quality time with a nourishing stout – it's the long and short of warming winter relief.



A WORLD-CLASS STOUT DOWN-UNDER.
THE FULL-BODIED BRASS MONKEY STOUT WON TWO GOLD MEDALS AT THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL BEER AWARDS. DISCOVER WHY AT THE SAIL & ANCHOR, THE COMO, THE QUEENS, THE FOUNDRY, THE BRASS MONKEY AND THE CAPTAIN STIRLING.

The Short On The Stout – Tasting Notes

BRASS MONKEY STOUT

Sail & Anchor Pub Brewery (six per cent)

Dark, rich and complex in nature, this full-bodied stout exhibits malty, caramel sweetness balanced by hints of coffee, dark chocolate and roasted barley. Oats contribute to the velvety texture of the ale and round out the malty palate. The perfect accompaniment to a plate of fresh oysters, a piping hot steak and mushroom pie or death by chocolate in a comfortable chair.

JAMES SQUIRE PORTER

Malt Shovel Brewery (five per cent)

A beer of finesse, its relationship to stout is evident in a rich, deep colour that is less opaque and unveils "window panes" of ruby mahogany. Unlike stout, the James Squire Porter has more delicate complexity. Roasted barley and wheat, subtle hoppings and long maturation create hints of bitter malt chocolate and a pillowy head. The finish is creamy, light and certainly invites continued enjoyment.

GUILDFORD PORTER

Inchant Brewing Company (six per cent)

Brewed with four varieties of hops, black chocolate and roast grains, then spiced with six secret ingredients, this 17th-century porter is black and bitter sweet with a luscious caramel head. Served chilled, the sharpness of the hops comes to the fore. But as the ale warms, the intriguing aromas, tastes and malts become apparent. Best served at the end of feasting in a half-pint or pint glass to allow the subtle changes.

GUINNESS

St James Gate Brewery, Dublin (4.3 per cent)

The taste of Guinness is a rich mix of roasted barley and a slightly caramel flavour balanced by perfectly selected hops. The roasted malts give it a rich, dark colouring, while the full body balances the high bitterness to create a well-rounded flavour.

COOPERS BEST EXTRA STOUT

Coopers Brewery (6.8 per cent)

Brewed naturally by the top fermentation method, this is a fine example of the robust, full-flavoured stout family. The unique, rich and dark texture of the product is produced by a specially roasted black malt and the product contains no preservatives or additives.

CASCADE SPECIAL STOUT

Cascade Brewery (5.8 per cent)

A blend of many natural ingredients combine to produce a stout of unique colour and character. Roasted barley is the base ingredient, producing a deep colour and delicious roasted, slightly nutty flavours. This is balanced by the use of extra hops to create underlying delicate floral hop flavours.

