



Catch and match

Seafood fans who want a beer to match their meal will love Bluebottle

Rory Gibson



SIR Isaac Newton had one when an apple allegedly fell on his head, prompting him to formulate his universal law of gravity. John Montagu, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich, also had one when he asked his staff to bring him some meat in between a couple of slices of bread so he wouldn't have to leave the gaming tables, thereby launching one of the great fast food options known to humankind.

And Kevin Rudd may have thought having dinner with Brian Burke was one, but now knows it was a tad dim to do so.

Bright ideas. Lots of people have them. Some change the world for ever, some make money. All are interesting, and often are so simple they leave people wondering why no one had thought of it before.

Sometimes they are staring you in the face, as was the case in the following tale.

The scene: four young marketing types are having a barbecue on the roof of the block of flats where one of them lives in central Sydney.

They are mostly in their 20s, making a living selling other people's stuff, but they want more out of life than being wage slaves.

What, they mused with stubbies in hand, would be the thing that no one else has

thought of that would be a winner? Looking out over the neighbourhood, their eyes fell on a bustling complex of buildings nearby that is a gastronomic highlight of any visit to Sydney — the Pyrmont fish markets.

Bonk! A load of apples fell on their heads. Why not make a beer engineered specifically to match with seafood?

Scott Douglas was one of those four visionaries. "We all had jobs in marketing in the beer and food industries, and we know what a good idea is from a marketing point of view," he says.

"It just seemed like a winner from the moment we twigged to it."

There's probably a lot of bright ideas that are born at barbecues but die the next day under the crushing weight of a gale-force hangover, but this one had legs.

Douglas and his mates formed a company, Fusion Brewing, and set out to design a beer that they could sell to seafood lovers.

That was about a year ago, and after months of tests they unhooked their Bluebottle beer and let it swim off to find its niche.

Bluebottle has a distinctive taste, no doubt about it. It is made with the addition of aromatic hops to start with and then has lemon juice added to the brew. The effect is a drink that is light and citrusy, and with an alcohol content of 4.3 per cent, it is not going to blow you off the road like a bottle of chardy would.

The boys have stuck to the plan and come up with a beer that sits nicely with seafood of all types, from fish and chips wrapped in paper to a spread at a top restaurant.

"We enlisted the help of Matthew Evans (a



chef and food critic prominent in the Sydney press) and brewer Brian Watson (a beer guru who was the brewmaster at Australian Independent Brewers, an outfit that makes a lot of Australian beer under contract)," Douglas says.

"We told them what we were after and got their advice about how to go about it.

"Then we looked at a lot of European lagers, pilseners and pale ales, mainly lighter styles, and experimented with variations of the ones we liked, adding lemon and lime. The lemon worked better.

"We made five experimental brews and tested them on 500 people in total, at three tasting events, eventually settling on what is now Bluebottle.

"Everyone loves it. The feedback has been very positive."

It is being sold as a premium beer, which means it will cost you more than a Fourx stinnie — about \$65 for a case, \$18 for a six-pack and God knows what in a restaurant, but they will be fairly hard to find for a while.

Douglas says for now it's available only at the Chalk Hotel at Woolloongabba and Coast Country Cellars in northern NSW, but other stockists will soon come on board.

Order online at www.bluebottlebeer.com.au or contact Douglas, ph: 0435 029 625, scott@fusionbrewing.com.au.

Bluebottle has a unique taste and is a good idea, well executed. Hopefully it's an idea with long appeal.

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NATURAL pair ...
the flavours of seafood match well with the lemon zing of Bluebottle, left.



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QUEENSLAND

Brisbane

STEAK AND GUINNESS PIE FOR ST PATRICK'S DAY

SERVES 4

1 kg round steak
1 tbs flour
1 tsp brown sugar
1 tbs raisins (optional)
5 onions, finely sliced
300ml Guinness
8 rashers bacon, diced
3 tbs lard
Parsley, chopped
Shortcrust pastry

Cut the steak into bite sized cubes, roll in seasoned flour, and brown in the lard together

with the bacon. Place the meat in a casserole. In another pan, fry the onions until golden before adding them to the meat. Add the raisins (if wanted) and brown sugar, pour in the Guinness, cover tightly and simmer over a low heat, or place in a very moderate oven (160-180C) for 2½ hours. Stir occasionally, adding a little more Guinness or water if the rich brown gravy starts to get too thick. Meanwhile, line a deep pie dish with half the pie crust: bake it blind then add the Guinness/beef mixture from the casserole, cover with the top layer of pie crust, and bake until finished, probably about 10 more minutes.

