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Winter Brings Out the Tastiest Brew

THIS is a great time of year to be a beer lover not that there's ever a bad time, but the dead heart of winter usually flushes out some rich, gut-warming seasonal brews that are better medicine for the common cold than anything you'll get in a chemist. The cold weather inspires brewers to tinker with styles and flavours more familiar to Europeans than those commonly revered on Australia's lager soaked shores. Coffee has inspired a couple of brewers this year, notably the team at the Burleigh Brewing Company. The fledgling Gold Coast brewery has a small-batch department called A Bit On The Side, which produced a terrific English ale called My Wife's Bitter earlier in the year. The second beer to come from ABOTS is Black Giraffe, a black beer brewed with coffee beans. It isn't a typical porter, stout or black lager head brewer Brennan Fielding, reluctant to pigeonhole it, describes it as a porter fermented with lager yeast. The name Black Giraffe comes from the colour of the beer, obviously, but also from the Zarraffa's coffee used in the brew and its special tall, screen printed 650ml bottles. Zarraffa's takes its name from the Arabic word for giraffe. Fielding didn't just add brewed coffee to the tank during fermentation, a process that effectively waters down the beer and divides the flavours. He threw in more than 100kg of freshly ground coffee beans during the brewing phase, ensuring the coffee flavour became a character trait of the beer and not window dressing. The combination of coffee and beer is not new, but Black Giraffe is an excellent example of how well they work together. This sort of beer is terrific to have with dessert or sitting round a campfire. There were 600 cartons made so it may be difficult to find but call 5593 6000 or email info@burleighbrewing.com and they will point you to the nearest stockist.