

# ARTICLE

## ILLAWARRA MERCURY

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# Quench

with GLEN HUMPHRIES

## Winemakers branch out to beer

With their William Bull Brewery, the De Bortoli family is one of a handful of winemakers trying their hand at the craft beer market.

The brewery, which is based in Bilbul - about 10 minutes outside the NSW town of Griffith - first had a crack at it in the late 1990s but put it on the backburner until the arrival of operations manager Rob Glastonbury.

"The family bought the old Sovereign Hill brewery and tried it once and it didn't quite work out for them," he says. "My history is with Foster's Brewing for about 15 years. So when I arrived Darren De Bortoli asked me to have a look at it and what could be done."

That included spending a lot of money in getting things up to what Glastonbury calls "big brewery standard".

The brewery is named for the founder of Bilbul and, in 2007, released its first beer, Red Angus pilsener (named in keeping with the brewery's other "bull" puns). They followed up with William's Pale Ale about eight months ago.

"That's our search for the same high quality but with a degree of drinkability," Glastonbury says of the pale ale. "Red Angus is a very powerful beer. It's got a lot of dyed-in-the-wool supporters but there's never going to be a big market (for it). William's Pale is a bit more approachable for the general market."

### Red Angus Pilsener, \$18 for a six-pack

This was the first beer made by the William Bull Brewery and it was a great way to start things up. It being a pilsener, I was expecting a malty flavour but was pleasantly surprised to discover the fruitiness in the mid-palate. It's the sort of beer I could happily drink more of.

### William's Pale Ale, \$16 for a six-pack

The brewery look upon this as an entry-level craft beer. In other words, something that's perfectly drinkable yet not too challenging to your mainstream beer drinker. Craft beer lovers will likely opt for Red Angus over this but the clean, sharp citrus flavours should make casual drinkers and newbies quite happy.

### Strongbow Pear Cider, \$15.99 for a six-pack

For years Strongbow virtually had the cider market all to itself but now everyone's making the stuff. So Strongbow has decided to add a pear cider. It has a refreshing pear flavour but I'm not entirely sure it'll be able to woo people away from other cider brands.



DE BORTOLI WINES