

# SPRING ESKY

The sun's finally stopped kidding and come out to play for real. Fill the Esky with beer, then add ice. But which beers?



## 1 LORD NELSON THREE SHEETS (5.5%)

DIRECT from the tuns out back, the Nelson's bottled Sheets pours orange with a fluffed white head, a lovely lacy bead which laces all the way to Christmas. Delectable citrus hop notes, an effervescent, creamy mid-palate and a restrained bitterness in the mouth with a fairly dry finish.  
**Verdict:** A must for Spring Carnival.

## 2 COOPERS PALE ALE (4.5%)

PALE gold, gently cloudy with fine creamy and lingering foam, it has aromatics of fruit, pine cones and wine grapes with underlying pine resin, raw nuts and fresh bread. The palate is full and broad yet treads lightly, rich, malty and stone fruits finished with a dash of phenolic and astringency. Wrapped up by the lingering hand of spicy, bittering hops. This is a very nicely balanced beer, complex, savoury and characterful. Excellent.  
**Verdict:** The definitive Australian.

## 3 MONTIETH'S RADLER (5%)

FRUIT tingle nose with a lemonade flavour reminiscent of shandy (shudder) from the Kiwi beer barons. Lime cordial notes preside but this one is pleasantly drinkable without being over-sweet.  
**Verdict:** A cross-over beer that surprises.

## 4 BEEZ NEEZ (4.7%)

A GREAT step into beer for non-beer drinkers. A slight residual sweetness comes through from the malted wheat and honey and great springtime aromas of honeycomb. This uniquely styled beer is widely available in premium bottles and even widely found on tap at good venues, making it a good stand-out from the run-of-the-mill generic of Australian lagers.  
**Verdict:** Beats a bee sting in a clover patch any day.

## 5 CASCADE BLONDE (4.8%)

THE best zesty brew outta Cascade in ages, this one hits high and hoppy on the nose with lip-smacking passionfruit and lime notes at the vanguard. Subtly sweet on the palate yet classically citric, this comely Blonde gently detonates in a shower of flavoursome fireworks voluptuously bodied enough to linger yet tantalising enough to have you wanting more, more, more.  
**Verdict:** This blonde's a bomb on the back-palate.

## 6 3 RAVEN'S BLOND (5.2%)

A BIG soft-bodied blond with amber roots, this delicious drop from Bill Lawry-country on the Victorian city fringe is a stouter yet still sympathetic sister to Hoegaarden Grand Cru, arriving hazy and honey-hued and packing a bounteous bouquet of sticky fruits like apricot, peaches and tangelos, all anchored by white pepper hints.

**Verdict:** A jucious lady rap-rapping at the flavour gates.

## 7 MOO BREW WHEAT (5.1%)

CLOUDY as a Restatman dawn, this Moo bellows its greatness on impact, lacing up a densely billowing powder of lustrous yellow yeast, befitting its stylishly sawn-off pseudo-champers packaging. Fizzing with fruity, spicy flavours as disparate as banana and cardamom, it's a short, glorious sprint from glass to gullet.

**Verdict:** Surely the apple of the Apple Isle's eye.

## 8 FERAL WHITE (4.6%)

THIS is a Belgian-style wheat beer, also known as witbier or white. The flagship, and most widely distributed of this Swan Valley, WA, craft brewery's range. Feral white displays all the characteristics of its style: citrus and spicy coriander notes, a clean, dry palate with a tart flavour infused from the use of a witbier yeast strain.

**Verdict:** Don't be afraid of its cloudy appearance: a beer even a Feral could enjoy.

Back to 3 Ravens

THE FRIDGE

Best of the Season



"Unibroue's *La Fin Du Monde*, *Trois Pistoles* and *Chambly Noire* put my taste buds into overdrive! I first sampled its wonderfully unique beers while working on *I, Robot* with Wil Smith in Vancouver, and found them big, gutsy, high-alcohol, full-bodied, very hoppy and totally in-your-face. Being bottle conditioned, these Belgian ales survive long travelling times to remain fresh and alive on the palate." PAUL MERCURIO



## LA FIN DU MONDE

A WHOPPING nine per cent ale that pours cloudy with a nice tight, white head and a golden-to-light-amber colour. Has a fruity, spicy aroma, with orange up front and a hint of white chocolate and vanilla. A complex, malty mouth-feel which had me thinking of orange, coriander, pepper and candy sugar. It possesses a strong alcohol heat which dissipates, leaving a subtle baked-banana yeasty character in the background. A great beer with roast beef — just make sure you add some to the gravy!



## TROIS PISTOLES

AGAIN, a nine per cent Belgian-style ale which pours quite dark, with a reddish tinge, leaving a head that's a tight beige and dissipates to a lingering froth. Has a slightly malty sweet nose but not much hop aroma. Reminds me a little of Orval, with hints of lavender, black currant and toffee. Mouth-feel is complex with toffee, candied fruit, ginger, orange, raisins and citrus notes. A bit like a Christmas pudding. No discernible hop bitterness but does possess a raisin-like yeast ester which lingers on the finish. Enjoy it with a really good cheese platter but hold the raisins.



## CHAMBLY NOIRE

AT 6.2 per cent, the lightweight of the bunch, but it still pours a black-coffee colour, with a loose head that doesn't waste time in relaxing. There are faint aromas of coffee, dark malt and caramel on the nose. The mouth-feel is quite dry again, with cocoa beans predominant, followed by crystal malt and a hint of smokiness. The finish is dry with some lingering fruit esters and a smoky malt character. I'd have this with a ploughman's platter or antipasto plate.