

Local beers are a top drop

CHEERS to Australian beers. Local brews have blown their international rivals out of the pint glass in a blind taste test.

Hahn Premium Lager was the nation's best-tasting lager, according to a taste test of 46 premium beers by consumer magazine *Choice*.

The panel of six beer experts found that low-carbohydrate lager Pure Blonde, brewed at Foster's Abbotsford brewery, was equal second with Italian drop Peroni.

The nation's biggest-selling beer, Victoria Bitter, was the third best tasting lager, ahead of international giants Grolsch, Heineken and Corona.

KATE ADAMSON

It shared the third-place spotlight with rivals Toohey's New, James Boags and four imported lagers.

Sydney's James Squire Golden Ale and Fremantle's Little Creatures Bright Ale topped the ales, outdoing Britain's Boddington's.

South Australia's Coopers Best Extra Dry stout beat Ireland's Guinness Draught, according to the expert panel whose findings were backed by 10 more men and women.

Boutique Aussie drop Bluetongue Traditional Pilsner was rated best pilsner ahead of San Miguel and locally brewed Beck's.

The expert panel scored each beer out of 20, based on the system used in the Australian Beer awards, judging flavour and body, aroma, appearance and technical quality.

Mainstream Australian beers Victoria Bitter and Tooheys New were way ahead of many international rivals, *Choice* spokesman Christopher Zinn said.

It proved being foreign didn't guarantee it was better.

Foster's Group spokeswoman Felicity Watson said it was not surprising VB did so well.

"A slab of VB is sold every second in Australia. It has a great taste and heaps of Australians agree."

"Full marks to the brewers of these standard drops for producing quality beers at an affordable price," Mr Zinn said.

Local dominance also had a lot to do with freshness, he said.

For example, Beck's imported from Germany was beaten by locally brewed Beck's.

"Beer goes stale within three to six months of bottling and most imported brews travel to Australia on container ships," Mr Zinn said.

To get the best imported beer look at the use-by date.

"It will help you decide if it's worth spending extra money on premium, imported beer," Mr Zinn said.

TOP DOZEN LAGERS

Scored out of 20

Hahn Premium	Australia	16.5
Kokanee Glacier	Canada	16.5
Peroni Nastro Azzuro	Italy	16
Pure Blonde	Australia	16
Asahi Superdry	Thailand	15.5
Budweiser	USA	15.5
Coopers Premium	Australia	15.5
Holsten Premium	Germany	15.5
James Boags Premium	Australia	15.5
Tooheys New	Australia	15.5
Victoria Bitter	Australia	15.5
Carlsberg	Australia	15

Herald Sun Sunday 22 July Page 15