

Beer and Food Combo

by Louie Anna Coen

WITH WARMER WEATHER setting in and the desire to enjoy it stronger than ever, the popularity of the Swan Valley blooms. On a sunny Saturday afternoon I had the pleasure of experiencing Ironbark Brewery in Caversham. What springs to mind when thinking of a brewery is not only distinctly flavoured beers, but a beer garden, live band, a couple of friends and pub style grub you can devour – and Ironbark managed to fulfil all my expectations.

The Salt and Pepper Squid and Three Dips and Damper kicked the day off to a great start. Freshly made damper served warm is best eaten the second it hits the table.

Beetroot, pumpkin and walnut, and rocket, basil and cashew were the three dips of the day. Stout, Mountain Berry and Pepper damper is something you really need to try for yourself as words would not do it justice. Sunflower and Turmeric was the second damper to have with our dips and this was creamy and nutty, with a hint of warmth from the turmeric. Both dampers offered a contrast in flavours to enhance the flavours of the dips, which complemented one another with their equally unique and powerful flavours, each holding its own amongst the others.

Salt and Pepper Squid was an ideal entrée to begin with, served with a homemade tartare sauce and a spicy chutney on a bed of beautiful salad. The squid on its own was spicy and full of flavour with a crisp lightly covered batter, and it didn't even require sauce – though the mix of flavours from the chutney with a touch of lime brought out the subtle flavour of the squid. Both entrées were served with Ironbark brewed beers and with so many types of beer to choose from, there will always be that perfect beer to enjoy with your food.

We then got stuck into the 'Tucker Menu' for the seriously big drinkers and eaters. Anyone for the Big Mallee Bull? This was a triple decker scotch fillet steak sandwich with the lot, served with sweet potato wedges, a side salad and presented on a huge serving platter just to accommodate the size of the burger itself. From the moment I sunk my teeth into this burger (using a knife and fork mind you) I could taste the perfectly cooked onions, juicy steak, egg, cheese, crispy seasoned bread, mayonnaise, mushrooms and bacon.



But which beer to have? A Hannan's Lager perhaps? Perfect choice with no preservatives, no sugar and no glucose (as with all Ironbark beers). And if the Big Mallee Bull isn't carnivorous enough for you, there is always the Boundary Rider Burger, complete with a 250 gram kangaroo patty plus the works.

Ironbark Brewery forked out another main of Marinated Chicken Tenderloins with Greek yoghurt, coconut cream and turmeric over rice and with a salad. Garnished with walnuts, a fanned strawberry and balls of rockmelon, watermelon and honeydew melon, the presentation of the plate gleamed with elegance.

The only characteristic differentiating the Ironbark from a fine dining restaurant is the casual, relaxed setting of being under the sun, watching a live band with a couple of beers and huge portions of real food. What more could you ask for?

Ironbark Brewery has a friendly atmosphere with a social beer garden to enjoy award-winning beers. It's an excellent place to take the family for a meal, or how about getting a few of your friends for a weekend of beer and wine tastings that will no doubt have you ordering off their enticing menu. Not often do we find a place that has everything, but when we do we make regular appearances.

Ironbark Brewery

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