

# Dark and stormy

They're bold, black and the perfect, palatable winter beer coat, writes **MIKE GRIBBLE**.

**ENVISAGE THE** fug of a crackling fire, a dark, dew-frosted night and an even darker pint of foaming, rich ale or stout. It's the ideal midyear scenario for any beer lover.

Dark styles are all the rage this winter, their attraction being rich, rounded, comforting and toasty flavours from their extra-roasted barley and malt content.

They might seem old-fashioned but there's a rush of the new at this end of the bar from Adelaide, Sydney and Tassie.

Seeing Double is a lustful new release from what will be South Australia's most lauded craft brewery, Brewboys, at Regency Park.

Stephen Nelsen and Simon Sellick have injected wisdom and humour into their ebullient range, most notably their "wee heavy", Seeing Double (8% alc/vol), which extracts stunning flavours from peated malt, prominent in Scottish whisky making.

Nelsen says punters may also detect "banana or lolly-like esters amongst the caramel and toffee-laced vapours" from the brew named for Sellick and his twin brother.

It is even labelled with his family's Rose clan ceilidh tartan, used as the preferred party cloth for centuries.

And don't overkill it - just leave it on the floor, not cool, not warm, inside winter's back door to maximise flavour. It's about to be widely available but intuitive beer buffs can order it and other Brewboys limited releases online at [www.brewboys.biz](http://www.brewboys.biz)

From Tasmania, the seductive label Moo Brew continues to direct its flavours at just one pub on the mainland, the Wheatsheaf Hotel at Thebarton.

In butcher and schooner only, Moorilla Estate's Moo Stout (8.2% alc/vol) is on limited tap (and vintage hand pump) at the Wheaty, where SA's best-informed beerist, Jade Flavell, lovingly elevates its status as a "velvet sledgehammer".

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A winter ale at The Wheatsheaf Hotel.  
Picture: GRANT NOWELL.

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## TASTING NOTES TONY LOVE

**TORZI MATTHEWS SCHIST ROCK RIESLING**  
Eden Valley  
12%  
\$15  
94 points

Pretty lime zest and juice from the start, with a splash of brown lime cordial, give this crisp and pure expression that suits and sits on the palate as its chalky, mineral textures coat the mouth and a friendly natural acidity creates an almost spicy lift in the end. Excellent value.  
[domenic.torzi@bigpond.com.au](mailto:domenic.torzi@bigpond.com.au)

**THE BIG BLIND 2006 NEBBIOLO/ BARBERA**  
Adelaide Hills  
14.5%  
\$28  
93 points

From the First Drop stable, with hip labelling that says little, here you get crimson rose fragrance and wafts of herb gardens and a little barrel-smokiness in the medium-weight palate. Very seductive, as is the restrained licorice and fruit power, lovely textures, and lots of fascination.  
[www.firstdropwines.com](http://www.firstdropwines.com)

**GEOFF WEAVER 2008 SAUVIGNON BLANC**  
Lanswood  
13.5%  
\$24  
92 points

As the '08 sauvignon blancs start showing up, this higher Hills version stakes a spot at the delicate end of the scale, a touch of sweet tropical fruit the main attraction, with quite a bit of concentration and weight in the mouth. A fine, talc-like texture gives further complexity.  
[www.geoffweaver.com.au](http://www.geoffweaver.com.au)

**SMYTHE ROAD 2005 SHIRAZ**  
Barossa Valley  
14.5%  
\$39  
93 points

Undeniably rich and ripe Barossa in a bottle from the Stonewell subregion, with a touch of interesting tar through the big, burblingly sweet blue-skinned plum flavours. Lightly handled tannin delivery allows the fruit to sing - a modern Barossa voice full of power.  
[www.smytheroad.com](http://www.smytheroad.com)

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