

We don't grow  
Chardonnay grapes  
at Heggies Vineyard.  
We nurture, cajole,  
coddle and indulge  
them.

Because every grape in a single vineyard  
is precious, the vines are hand raised  
and hand pruned.

Then the grapes are hand picked and  
gently hand pressed to ensure every one  
of the little darlings makes it into one of  
the most coveted (and cosseted) wines  
in the nation.



*Singularly spoilt.*

# OVERSEAS NEWS

*Crafty efforts are underway to make  
sophisticates of US beer drinkers.*

## BEER BUFFS GO GOURMET

Wine sales may be surging in the US, but beer is still the country's first-choice alcoholic beverage. For most Americans, drinking beer means bars, ballparks and burger joints. Now there's a move afoot to associate brewskies with gourmet dining. According to the Brewers Association, which represents around 1400 so-called craft breweries, artisan beers are the most palatable partners for everything from spicy Korean barbecue to rich chocolate desserts.

Today, craft brewers account for annual production of 6.7 million barrels of mostly malt-based beers, often with arcane names such as Brooklyn Scorch, Heavyweight Stickenjab, Sixpoint Bolshoi and Dogfish Head Raison d'Etre.

It's brews such as these that are being hyped by the Brewers Association to enhance America's dining experience, but they're not the only ones jumping on the craft beer bandwagon. There's also a new breed of suds stewards known as "beer sommeliers".

Their mission is not only to recommend the right beer to go with the dishes you select but also to serve it in an appropriate glass – a brandy snifter or tall tankard, for example – to bring out its characteristic flavours. Restaurants are getting in on the act with menus that pair mains like beef teriyaki with cream

ale or desserts like crème brûlée with imperial IPA. A bottle of the most sought-after brews – such as 1993 Thomas Hardy's Ale, at US\$23 – will set you back as much as a bottle of good wine.

Bill Catron, beer sommelier at Brasserie Beck in Washington, DC, and recently dubbed a knight by the Belgian Chevalerie du Fourquet des Brasseurs, says: "There's such a range of beers today, it's as big as a rainbow; you can pair them with practically anything." Perhaps it's time to make space in the wine cellar for a few tinnies.

ANTHONY MANIFOLD

