



new era on the brew

Interactive website reflects growing appreciation for subtle differences between beer styles

brewing By **STUART MCKINNON**

AS the palate of the average beer lover grows more discerning, a Highgate businessman's own fascination with brewing has spawned a website for people to debate the merits of Australia's best drops.

Milas Burke (35), who runs design company Bam Creative, set up www.brew.com.au using his

expertise as a web developer and his passion for beer.

It allows visitors to review and rate their favourite and least favourite beers, sharing their thoughts with others through an online forum.

Mr Burke said there was already a plethora of websites dedicated to the appreciation and understanding of wine and he predicted beer was following a similar trend.

"With strict drink-driving laws and the growing health concerns associated with alcohol, I think there's an increasing focus on the

quality and taste of beer rather than the volume of consumption," he said.

"People are starting to appreciate and respect the subtle differences between beer styles and breweries.

"The image of a slab-drinking Aussie is slowly being replaced with a person who can differentiate and appreciate the difference between a pilsener and a pale ale."

Mr Burke said the growth in small-boutique or craft breweries reflected the trend.

"With an emphasis on quality and

taste, local boutique breweries are taking some of the market from the big assembly-line brewers," he said.

"Some of these labels have started as home brews, with the brewer circulating their product among friends and then expanding their operations to tackle the broader market."

Mr Burke said some people still assumed the only good beer was a foreign beer.

But there were some great local breweries such as Gage Roads Brewing and the award-winning Little Creatures Brewery to name a few.

Brew.com.au has details on 168

beers from 46 Australian breweries with the list growing weekly.

The site has attracted 2000 visitors from 20 countries in the past month.

"Surprisingly, 40 per cent of our visitors are from overseas so the site seems to be attracting global interest, which is great for our Australian product," Mr Burke said.

Despite his love of beer, Mr Burke said he was not a big drinker.

"I probably have one or two beers on two evenings of the week," he said.

"Gone are the days of the \$30 carton each weekend."