



# Beer in grape company

## Boutique brewer in Barossa

By PETER GOSNELL

THE internationally renowned Barossa Valley wine region in South Australia has recently admitted an interloper to its ranks — Barossa Valley Brewing, a boutique manufacturer of premium beer.

BVB is the brainchild of former investment bankers Denham D'Silva and Fergus McLachlan, son of former federal MP Ian McLachlan.

Both men love beer.

And both men believe Australian throats have for too long been denied a reasonable selection of premium, locally brewed beers.

So when they were putting together a business plan, they looked at the boutique and micro-brewers who had substance beneath the froth and bubble.

"There's a company in Melbourne called Mountain Goat, there's James Squire, and Little Creatures... they do an absolutely beautiful pale ale," Mr McLachlan said at the recent launch of BVB's first vintage, Bee Sting.

"You've got guys like Mountain Goat who are really exciting the industry and who actually started with just \$10,000," Mr D'Silva said.

"Then you've got guys like Little Creatures who started with a sig-

nificant amount of seed money."

The two beer enthusiasts tapped banking colleagues for funds, something Mr McLachlan said was incredibly easy because the investors were dreaming about amber dividends.

"They didn't ask what sort of financial return they'd earn on their investment," he said. "They just wanted to know how many free cases they could expect."

The partners built their micro brewery in a disused section of Chateau Yaldara, now owned by Brian McGuigan's McGuigan Simeon Wines.

Construction began only after they spent three years researching the technology and infrastructure necessary to build a micro brewery capable of servicing national distribution.



Cheers... Denham D'Silva and Fergus McLachlan toast their new beer Bee Sting in Sydney.

Picture: ROSS SCHULTZ