

# Forget rugby, we're the world's best at beer

## **BARRY Mc CALLUM**

You've just got to accept that Aussies and Kiwis can throw a rugby ball around better than our guys.

Take heart. South Africans are better at brewing the beers we cry into week-in, week-out than our Antipodean rivals.

Centurion hobbyist Mike Heydenrych has successfully defended his Tri-Nations home-brewing crown.

His was the final beer to be adjudged by a panel convened in Australia and "as the last beer to be

judged it was not a decision of if he would win but by how much".

"Personally as a judge I have not scored a beer so highly and it was an easy decision to make," gushed an adjudicator.

"All I can say is that if you are ever travelling this way my mash tun is your mash tun and the quicker you can get here the better!" (A mash tun is the vessel which barley and water are heated to convert starches into fermentable sugars.)

In the 2003 Homebrew Tri-Nations, Heydenrych's American Pale Ale tied for first place with the

Belgian Strong Ale submitted by Charles Cohen, another South African. Both are members of Wort Hog Brewers, a "club dedicated to the art and science of making good beer".

Heydenrych, the current chair of the club, has been home-brewing since 2001 and now operates a 60l all-grain brewery from his home in Doringkloof.

As any home-brewer will tell you, work always gets in the way of your passion.

But Heydenrych has managed to combine the two.

He was instrumental in getting a

microbrewery installed in the University of Pretoria's department of chemical engineering, where he's an associate professor.

A brewing practical is now part of the undergraduate curriculum and two final-year students are currently doing their research projects using this facility.

"The construction of the microbrewery is just part of a greater thrust into the field of biochemical engineering," said department head Professor Philip de Vaal.

Heydenrych celebrated the opening by brewing up a batch of his much-lauded pale ale, aptly named

Troll Ale as the brewery was installed in a cavernous room underneath the chemical engineering department.

He's also knocking up a keg's worth to exhibit at the beer gathering of the year, the Wort Hog Brewers' Summer Festival.

To design the university's 50l microbrewery, he enlisted the help of Malcolm du Toit, a senior trader brewer with beer giant SABMiller, and Moritz Kallmeyer, who owns Drayman's brewery in Silverton.

Kallmeyer founded Wort Hogs and is the man behind the beer AltStadt Weizen.