



Andrew Moore of boutique brewery Schwartz Brewery in Sydney pours a pilsner at Olims Hotel.

Photo: GARY SCHAFER

Beer aficionados spoilt for choice

By DAVID CURRY

YESTERDAY'S freezing wind and intermittent showers weren't enough to deter hundreds of beer connoisseurs from wandering around the National Capital Craft Beer Festival at Olims Hotel in Ainslie.

Festival organiser Daniel Gaul said numbers in the morning were up on last year.

"Hopefully the weather will be a little bit better tomorrow. And more people will head in later this afternoon, especially for Mental as Anything."

Last year's festival, which attracted 1500 people, was so successful that tickets sold out, prompting the organisers to spread this year's over the entire weekend.

The festival has 17 exhibitors and 80 different beers. There are also four

gourmet food stalls and a barbecue raising money for the Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group.

As well as musical entertainment by Mental as Anything and Casual Projects, the festival offered a Crafter Chef competition in which local chefs battled it out mixing fine food with craft beers.

One of the brewers in the hotel's courtyard was Andrew Moore, of Sydney's Schwartz Brewery, the festival's major sponsor. Mr Moore said there was "a real passion and an art" to producing a good brew.

"You have an idea of what beer you'd like to brew, and you ascertain a recipe and go from there - but it really is about making something you'd like to drink yourself," he said.

The big hit yesterday, ironically given the weather, had been the Summertime

light ale, which drank like a lager and was "very clean and crisp". The alcohol level was about 4.6 per cent.

Braving the elements during the afternoon was Mark Tomley, of Kingston. He said last year had been "brilliant", so he had decided to come again.

"Getting to taste a good selection of beer, and great food, makes it a great day. It's a good location, too," he said.

"Plus it expands your horizons. I am a beer drinker, but it's great to get out and taste some new ones."

Olms Hotel general manager Brook Paulka said he hoped the festival grew each year to where it became a special event not just for the hotel, but for Canberra.