

Product Review: Wort Organic Soft Drink

Healthy fizzy drinks at last

By DOM O'BRIEN

The three contrasting flavours of ginger, lemon and sugar meet in a powerful, yet balanced, blend in the Lemon and Ginger variety of the Wort Organic drinks that I willingly knocked back for this product sampling.

Individually, these very different flavours – the hot, the sweet and the sour (sounds like the sequel to a spaghetti Western) — can be very intense. But combined in the right balance, they create a complementary whole. This drink really hits the mark.

Ordinarily I'm not a fan of soft drinks because of their sweetness but in this case the ginger and lemon offset it perfectly. With the background harmony of several herbal extracts to soften the edges, it really works.

The second variety I sampled is the 'Travel Easy', so called because of the peppermint infusion. It comes through quite noticeably with a powerful peppermint and sage fragrances (at least, I think it's the sage) that catch your palate on the way down.

These two intriguing drinks are produced by the Wort Organic company in Far North NSW. They were developed by owner Kerry Symons in response to her concerns about the range of unhealthy soft drinks on the market.

So what does "wort" mean? I know it is not one of those ugly things witches get on their noses, so what is it? It is an old English term meaning herb or plant, and a reference to the genuine organic herb extracts used in these drinks.

Flavour: The flavour is excellent; strong, balanced, leaves you wanting more. The Lemon and Ginger variety is more easily grasped and the Travel Easy is for those who like a more fragrant and unusual experience.

Organic Ingredients: Aside from the carbonated filtered water, almost all ingredients are certified organic or in conversion, including the herbs.

Price: The 330-millilitre bottles are reasonably priced at \$2.50, very competitive for a quality certified organic drink.

Availability: Wort Organic drinks are available at



health food stores and cafes in all states except the Northern Territory. The company is also distributing to Germany, Holland and England, and in the future to Canada and Japan. If your local store does not stock it, ask them to.

Naturalness: Some processing is necessary to make a carbonated, soft drink but the ingredients list is fairly short and all ingredients are natural. There are, of course, no preservatives, colours or flavours as these are not allowed under organic certification.

Labelling: The labels carry the ACO logo, contact details and one bottle even listed ingredients in six languages, obviously for the European market. There is not really any educa-

tional information about organics, which is something I'd like to see, but otherwise good, and the word "organic" is prominently displayed.

Wort Organic products bring some respectability back to the soft drink market. After so many years of finding just terrible artificial drinks, it's refreshing (oh, come on I had to throw a pun in somewhere) to find a soft drink that appeals to the adult palate, is better for you, well-priced, and tastes great.

Give artificial drinks the flick and support an Australian certified organic product. You'll enjoy it, I promise. ■

Contact: phone: 1800 350 034; website <www.wortorganic.com>.

INGREDIENTS

LEMON and Ginger (Traditional)

Carbonated filtered water, cane sugar*, ginger*, lemon juice*, lemon rind*, citrus fruit*, citric acid, herbal essences: chamomile*, sage*, lemon myrtle tea**, spice laurel extract.

Travel Easy

Carbonated filtered water, cane sugar*, ginger*, lemon juice*, lemon rind*, citrus fruit*, citric acid, herbal essences: chamomile*, sage*, peppermint*, lemon myrtle tea**, spice laurel extract.

* certified organic ** in conversion