

Inkerman Hotel 1861 –
375 Inkerman Street, Balaclava
MEL: 58 F10



Inkerman Hotel, 2004

The first licensee of the Inkerman was Henry Travers in 1861. Billy Duncan, the famous jockey who rode Phar Lap, owned the Inkerman in the early 1970s and is said to have kept a horse trough outside the front of the hotel! At that time, the Inkerman had a lounge known as the Snake Pit, with no live music, only a single jukebox. A Marmsbury man named Jeff Andrews, but known locally only as Rabbit, was also a regular at the Inkerman during this period. Although he lived in Melbourne during the week, every weekend he returned to Marmsbury, and every Monday night the hotel was full of the rabbits that Andrews was selling for a dollar a pair!

Strippers were featured at the Inkerman on Friday afternoons, yet this practice was stopped with the arrival of current owners, William Drake, a former Footscray player who was part of the team that won the 1956 Grand Final. Popular amongst sportsmen - football players and boxers, including the Australian champion Barry Michaels - the introduction of large screen televisions has cemented its reputation as a sports bar. The 2002 boxing match between Lewis and Tyson attracted 750 punters. There are a few residents upstairs, sustaining a function that most contemporary hotels have abandoned. The only remaining hotel on Inkerman Street east of St Kilda Road, the pub's adjoining bistro was converted to the upmarket Syrup Lounge in March 2002.