



📷 Bec Bovell, of Cygnet Mushroom Farm, has won gold for her mixed gourmet selection nominated by Christian Ryan and Glenn Byrnes. Must Credit: Picture: PAUL COUNTY

Food and Wine

It's gold, gold, gold for Tasmania at *delicious.* magazine's annual Produce Awards

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TASMANIA struck gold at the *delicious.* Produce Awards, announced at a gala event in Melbourne last night.

Launceston's Harvest Market was named Outstanding Farmers Market of the year and six of the 14 Tasmanian winners went on to win gold medals in the national finals.

Harvest Market opened in 2012. It was the brainchild of Jenny Edis, who was new to town. She joined up with another new arrival, Mary Mulvaney, and approached Kim

Seagram, co-owner of Stillwater Restaurant, for help. All three still are involved in the community committee that runs the market every Saturday.

Unlike most produce competitions, in which you nominate yourself, pay your money and wait to see how you are rated, for the past two of its 12 years, producers have to wait to be nominated by a chef in order to contest the four sections — from the dairy, the earth, the paddock and the sea.

The Tasmanian judges were: David Moyle, of Franklin; Iain Todd, formerly of Ethos; Philippe Leban, of A Tiny Place; and Christian Ryan and Glenn Byrnes, of Aloft.

Jon Healey, of Pyengana Dairy Company, is well used to being awarded. In 2015, he was Producer of the Year as well as winner of the dairy section. This year his cheddar aged 12 months won a gold medal.

Jon has been making the same cheese for 25 years, so it is not going to demand attention as a sexy new product.

“When you have a win people write about us in the local and Australia-wide publications that foodies read, and it brings us untold benefit,” he says.

By comparison, Bec Bovell is a rookie mushroom grower, having leapt to fill a gap in the market when Huon Valley Mushrooms closed in 2014 by establishing Cygnet Mushroom Farm in a former apple packing shed.

Bec has won gold for her mixed gourmet selection nominated by Christian Ryan and Glenn Byrnes. It always contains grey, white, yellow and pink oyster mushrooms, shiitake, nameko and one other, such as wood ear or shimeji.

When Robin and Antonia O’Brien first entered their Wellington Apiary prickly box honey in the delicious awards in 2015 it was at the suggestion of Winter Feast curator Jo Cook — a very good suggestion because they won the earth section that year.



📷 Launceston Harvest Market president Jenny Edis was the driving force behind the award-winning market and is still involved in the committee.



📷 A high-profile win gives small businesses like Wellington Apiary a very welcome boost.

This year Antonia was “very flattered” when Shannon Bennett of Vue de Monde nominated their leatherwood honey, which has won a gold medal.

“A win gives buoyancy to a small business like ours,” Antonia says. “The *delicious*. profile really reflects our customer base.”

Michael Frydrych quit managing ports all over the world to a “little retirement job” running Springfield Deer Farm at Mole Creek. He finds he has never worked harder in his life.

He supplies top local and national restaurants and sells at Mole Creek and Deloraine monthly markets.

Meru Miso (which I wrote about on July 18) has won a gold medal for its Sweet White Miso. Chris and Meagan de Bono started the company in Melbourne four years ago and moved it to Launceston last year.

MORE: MY MISO LIGHTBULB MOMENT

Chris said when he was named a Tasmanian winner that the awards “help get word out to people that we even exist, and that it’s a quality product. Part of our challenge strategy is to help educate people on different ways of using it.”



📷 Launceston-based Meru Miso has won a gold medal for its Sweet White Miso.



📷 Cover of September issue of Delicious magazine. Picture: SUPPLIED

Japanese chef Tetsuya uses Meru Miso, but a dollop of it will also do wonders for your bolognese sauce.

Richard Weston has won gold for the second year running with his Weston Farm Smoked Paprika, and on the back of last year's win production of the fresh capsicum has doubled to 1.5 tonnes.

Maggie Beer, the *delicious.* awards patron, has tried it and said the paprika was “really alive, lots of oil and freshness in there”.

The farm also produces sweet and hot paprika, and it's available at the Westons' Pigeon Hole Cafe in West Hobart.

“A medal gives us quite a bit of credence for good products. To us it means a great deal, as opposed to some other competitions,” Richard says.

Other Tasmanians in the finals were Tasmanian Butter Company cultured butter, Hill Farm canola oil, Flinders Island Meat wallaby, Blackman Bay Oysters, Mark Eather abalone and Woodbridge Smokehouse smoked trout.

National judges were Ashley Palmer-Watts, Shannon Bennett, Guillaume Brahimi, Peter Gilmore, Christine Manfield, Andrew McConnell, Alla Wolf-Tasker and Colin Fassnidge.

Details of all the winners available on delicious.com.au and in the magazine, out this Thursday.