

CULTIVATE WA

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

December 2014 Volume 5

Things that make you go mmm...

WA TASTE SENSATIONS

- MOUTH-WATERING PREMIUM PRODUCE
- ALL-NATURAL ICE CREAM SCOOPS UP SUCCESS
- MIAMI BAKEHOUSE - ON A ROLL





CULTIVATE WA

December 2014 | Volume 5

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VIEW FROM THE TOP

Welcome to this edition of Cultivate WA in which we showcase a number of our Premium Produce Award winners and some of the highlights of the IGA Perth Royal Show.

The success of the educational aspect of the Show is indicative of how imperative it is for the Royal Agricultural Society of WA to continue to emphasise the importance of modern farming techniques and innovations.



Dr Rob Wilson, President
The Royal Agricultural Society of WA

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IGAPERTH ROYALSHOW

27 SEPT-4 OCT 2014

A wonderful combination of agriculture, horticulture, education, entertainment, competitions, exhibitions and overall showmanship sums up the 2014 IGA Perth Royal Show

Having wrapped up for another year we are taking the highlights of the eight-day event, which is firmly embedded in West Australian culture, and showing them off.



SHOW AND TELL

Our newest exhibit Farmtech proved to be as successful as its counterpart - Farm 2 Food.

An educational wonderland of technology and fun, Farmtech led families on a journey of sophisticated discovery within agriculture.

It was here, in our latest pavilion, that children's eyes were opened to the meaning of farming with technology.

Its counterpart, the Farm 2 Food exhibition, was again a massive success, growing children's knowledge as to where their food comes from, how it is grown, how to cook it and to appreciate the people who produce it - our farmers.

Trophies and ribbons were the pinnacle of competitions although winning is only part of the reason exhibitors participate.



The Show's focus on education did not go unnoticed by those attending the event with 84% satisfied with the educational experience according to research carried out by Catalyse on behalf of the RAS.

The majority, 82%, agreed the Show was raising awareness of the value and importance of local agriculture and food production. A whopping 97% of attendees were satisfied with their experience this year, with 75% delighted.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

FROM THE TEAM AT THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA





A matter of taste

WITH HIS PASSIONATE APPROACH TO ALL THINGS FOOD-RELATED, GLOBE TROTTING CHEF DON HANCEY LOVES STIRRING THE POT FOR IDEAS AND INSPIRATION THAT WILL SERVE UP HIS MAIN MESSAGE: WA PRODUCE IS TOP OF THE MENU!

As WA Ambassador for Food chef Don Hancey is passionate about sharing the wonders of fresh, seasonal, local produce.

This whirlwind of energy with worldwide networks was enlisted by the RAS to become Ambassador for the Perth Royal Show Premium Produce Awards.

The winners of this category are the crème de la crème of entrants in the tough, fought-out categories of dairy, bread and pastry, wine, beer and olive oil.

To highlight the high standard and quality of these products, Mr Hancey was asked to create two signature dishes (p7) for a Show dinner RAS president Dr Rob Wilson hosted during the eight-day community extravaganza.

The many and varied guests included the Minister for Agriculture, Ken Baston, Show sponsors and dignitaries.

“The Show’s Premium Produce Awards are an outstanding idea,” Mr Hancey says.

“It puts a strong spotlight on the best that WA is making, producing, harvesting, baking and brewing.

“What I want to bring to the table is creating more awareness of these awards and of the producers of these products.

“To enter the Show’s competitions you must have great produce. If I can, I will enrol my network and restaurants to be aware of the Premium Produce products and to use them.”

In between promoting WA producers, farmers, commercial fishermen and food scientists Mr Hancey, with his ever-expanding business Panorama Catering, has turned an industrial unit in Osborne Park into a caterers’ kitchen, herb garden and venue

for a variety of corporate dinner parties.

Long sought after for his catering expertise, Mr Hancey is also recognised for his marketing skills. He is adept at developing effective strategies for producers to help grow their business opportunities and brand their product.

“What I bring to a client gets them the outcome they want,” he says. “It is all about marketing, branding and getting their produce in front of different markets.

“There are food and wine expos around the world, and especially in South East Asia, that I can help get them into. I have no skills for exporting but I can introduce them to new markets and the markets they want.”

And his services are in demand.

“In the early days consulting was a third of my business. Now that has swung around and, although catering is still an important part of my life, consulting now takes the largest chunk of it.”

Growing up in a family that lived on fresh produce whetted Mr Hancey’s appetite for the food industry and at 16 he left school and jumped into hospitality, gaining solid experience locally and overseas.

At age 23 he cashed in his stamp collection worth \$8,000, borrowed \$30,000 from his father and opened the Colonial, a 44-seater restaurant in Augusta.

After more stints overseas his association with the Regional Producers’ Associations in Margaret River and the Great Southern began, and he opened the first Margaret River Farmers’ Market, which he ran for a year.

While Mr Hancey rubs shoulders with politicians and counts celebrity chefs Pete Evans,

“WA has some of the best produce on the planet and I want to do everything I can to let the world know about it.”

Manu Feildel and Rick Stein as friends, the relationships he truly treasures are those he has formed with WA farmers, producers, growers and fishermen.

“I know some people go into the industry for the glamour side of it but that doesn’t pay the bills.

“Food is fashionable, celebrity chefs are courted like rock stars. There is a lot of glitz and glamour and many restaurant owners who open up to three small bars might, in reality, be working on very slim margins.

“There are a lot of producers, too, who do it really tough as Mother Nature can sometimes damage or destroy crops.”

Mr Hancey is doing his bit to ease the way for the WA producers he so values. “I feel I have a responsibility to use the knowledge and skills I have gained over 40 years to help improve and promote the food industry.

“WA has some of the best produce on the planet and I want to do everything I can to let the world know about it.”

Ricotta and Goat’s Cheese Tart

- Filling**
- 20g goat’s feta
 - 100g Borello ricotta
 - 1 egg yolk
 - 20ml Brownes cream
 - 5g parsley, chopped
 - 1g nutmeg
 - salt
 - pepper

Pastry
Basic shortcrust pastry

Bake at 160°C for 20-25mins.

- Roast Tomato Sauce**
- 1kg Trandos tomatoes, cut ½
 - 6 garlic clove
 - 1g thyme, fresh
 - 20ml Chapman River EVOO
 - salt
 - pepper

Chop herbs & garlic. Spread over tomato halves. Drizzle olive oil. Roast at 180°C for 20-30mins. Pass through a sieve. Cool prior to plating up.

Panna Cotta

- 2ltr Brownes milk
- 9 gelatine leaves
- 100g icing sugar
- 20g grated ginger
- 4 kaffir lime leaves

Bring milk, sugar, ginger and lime leaves to boil. Soak gelatine. Add gelatine once boiled then strain, let cool and put into jars or moulds.



Chocolate Brownie

- 100g dark chocolate
- 100ml Nail Brewing stout
- 3 eggs
- 250g butter
- 80g cocoa
- 300g dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 140g plain flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 100g walnuts (or any nut)

Melt together the dark chocolate and stout. Melt butter and combine with cocoa and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla. Mix. Sift in flour. Fold chocolate mix into butter mixture. Bake at 160°C for 40-50mins.

Beer	Pairing	Traditional	Modern Alternative	Don Recommends
Lager (LIGHT)	Seafood, snacks and spice	BBQ & Takeaway Chilli con Carne	Any Indian cuisine	Gage Roads Premium Lager
Pilsner (LIGHT)	Seafood, snacks and spice	Chicken Salmon	Gourmet Little Caesars pizza	Matso’s Smokey Bishop
Golden (MEDIUM)	Smoked meats and oily fish Hearty flavours, meats and sauces	Casseroles and Stews	Sweetlips beer battered whiting	Feral Brewing Hop Hog
Wheat Porter (FULL BODIED)	Smoked meats and oily fish Hearty flavours, meats and sauces	Roast Pork	Grilled spatchcock with lemon thyme	Last Drop Hefe
Stout (FULL BODIED)	Smoked meats and oily fish Hearty flavours, meats and sauces	Oysters Hot Pots	Beef ‘n’ Clout pie	Nail Brewing Clout Stout



WHAT'S BREWING?

A HIGHLY-CONTESTED AND RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF ENTRIES FOR THIS YEAR'S PERTH ROYAL BEER SHOW BECAME THE PERFECT PLATFORM FOR COMMERCIAL AND AMATEUR BREWERS TO SHOWCASE THEIR CRAFT BREWS, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO STAND OUT FROM THE PACK BY LAYING CLAIM TO AN AWARD

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF WA
PERTH ROYAL SHOW
PREMIUM
awards

With 437 entries from a total of 114 exhibitors the 16 judges and five associate judges were faced with two days of extreme taste testing; interrupted only by water, cheese and biscuits and the obligatory marking of the amber liquids!

Australian's love of craft beer may have led to the challenges of competing in a crowded market but you wouldn't know it, as these competitors embraced rather than shied away from it.

This year only two eastern states counterparts had a 'look in' when it came to winning trophies, with WA claiming the awards at a presentation dinner.

Monk Brewery and Kitchen and Mash Brewing dominated the competition – both walked away with major awards and medals.

Henley Brook's Mash Brewing conquered Best Commercial Brewery, Best WA Brewery and Best Pale Ale Draught with Copy Cat, which also claimed the Champion Australian Beer of the Year at the Australian International Beer Awards, held in Melbourne in May.

Monk Brewery and Kitchen, based in Fremantle, won Best West Australian Beer of the Show, Best Commercial Beer of the Show and Best Stout Draught.

Perth's amateur brewers went all out to claim their share of awards with Dr Mark Rivers, of Dudley Park, winning the Best Amateur Brewer, while Sorrento brewer, Mr Josh Masters was awarded Best Amateur Beer of the Show and Best Ale.

We asked champion head brewer Charlie Hodgson, of Mash, what makes the Swan Valley's brewery a premier one:

"I am reasonably stubborn as to what I like to brew and send out to consumers. And I guess it is how we blend and use the raw materials to find the correct balance," he says.

"I have a philosophical approach to brewing and try to keep it as simple as I can. I don't like using loads of different types of malts and hops in our beers - we prefer to keep it simple and let the key elements of the recipe shine! I have no intention of trying to reinvent the wheel here!

"My approach is to look at a style and what permeates – the high and low parts of what categorises that style. I have a very firm vision of what a style should be and from that can design a basic recipe quite quickly – break it down, fine tune it on paper and get it in the system!

"Our beer list is quite different to that of Craig Eulenstein of the Monk, John Stallwood from Nail Brewing and Brendan Varis from Feral to name a few. We all have different interpretations and strengths which is fantastic for the consumer.

"Big US style IPA's and hop driven interpretations of all styles are driving the market at the moment

and to a point we have to follow trend, we were drawn into that with Copy Cat."

With a personal bent towards English India Pale Ale, rather than the American Indian Pale Ales which have been dominating the beer scene for some time now, Mr Hodgson recognised Mash would need to follow suit or miss out on claiming their own substantial share of the market.

"The English style gives a different spin on taste but so many of our drinkers preferred the American style. So we made Copy Cat, went to market with it in April, and it has been huge for our business."

The awards won by Copy Cat at beer shows around the country speak for themselves.

"Awards are the pinnacle of our success," Mr Hodgson says. "The Perth Royal Beer Show is an important one – one that gives breweries' recognition by its peers."

But it isn't all about the awards.

"We have been very astute in treading the right path with regard to beer and continue to bring out new and exciting beers," Mr Hodgson says. "The summer months may see a new release from us!"

We'll drink to that!



Industry representatives and parliamentarians enjoyed award winning WA produce from the RAS Premium Produce Awards and other leading local suppliers. The event, at Parliament House, was hosted by the Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Hon. Ken Baston and the President of the RAS, Dr Rob Wilson. Guest speaker Jim Trandos spoke of the evolution of his family business established 75 years ago from small enterprise to international exporter.

RAS SHOWCASES WA HARVEST



An overseas delegation from Advoc Asia was served up a selection of divine WA produce at a reception hosted by WA law firm Kott Gunning and coordinated by the RAS. Featuring winning products from the RAS Premium Produce Awards and other local suppliers including wine, beer, dairy, spirits, breads and olive oil, the delegation was impressed by the diversity and quality of the WA menu.

According to Kott Gunning Managing Partner Tom Derbyshire, the evening was particularly appropriate as most of the delegates were from different parts of Asia and Europe and for many of them, it was their first time in Western Australia.

"A number of the delegates, who are very seasoned travellers, said it was the most memorable display of its kind that they had experienced," said Mr Derbyshire.



Above: Rural Ambassador Callum Wesley
Below: Rural Community Achiever Dr Mark Bin Bakar

LET IT RAIN

**RAS 2014 RURAL AMBASSADOR
CALLUM WESLEY HAS A PASSION
FOR INNOVATION**

Mr Wesley, 20, divides his time travelling 1,500kms a week working at his family's Southern Cross farm, another farm in York, and as specialist consultant for the Department of Agriculture & Food at Meriden.

The latter role is the result of his invention – a farming implement that contributes to the development of sustainability in low rainfall cereal agriculture, currently being trialled with a patent pending.

"We were experiencing minimal amounts of rain within the Southern Cross region," Mr Wesley explains.

"I was sick of waiting for the rainfall and was determined to do something about it. I recognised it was not the lack of rain but the lack of water efficiency.

"My design compacts the soil between the rows ready for seeding into an apex. As the rain falls, it hits the compacted soil between the row and runs down into the row. I call it rain harvesting."

Mr Wesley is now putting in a proposal to the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) for next year's funding for trials at five sites within the region.

When the young farmer isn't busy with farming or research and development, he is a committee member of the Far Eastern Agricultural Research Group for Southern Cross and is involved with Ag Connect, a network coordinated by the WA Farmers' Federation.

The Rural Ambassador competition is sponsored by the Perth Ambassador Hotel and coordinated by the RAS to recognise the contribution of young leaders who work to promote regional development.

BROOME HIGH-FLIER IS RURAL ACHIEVER

Broome-based comedian and musician Dr Mark Bin Bakar has added yet another achievement to his long list of accolades – that of the RAS Rural Community Achiever.

Dr Bin Bakar and his alter ego Mary G – TV viewers would be familiar with the character – is a man with a mission.

For many years he has been involved with issues such as music and the arts, reconciliation, education and health, the stolen generation, youth engagement and elderly support.

He is a former Indigenous Person of the Year and West Australian of the Year.

Coordinated by the RAS, the Rural Community Achiever award encourages members of rural communities to nominate exceptional and inspirational individuals.

The Rural Community Achiever receives \$2,000 cash plus a further \$2,000 is donated to a community project of their choice – Dr Bin Bakar has nominated indigenous art.



Perfect Chemistry

THE DETERMINATION AND VISION WHICH HAS SEEN SCIENTIST DR ROSS RAINBIRD SHAPE HIS COMPANY INTO A LEADER IN INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IS SET TO BENEFIT THE RAS

Heading up the privately-owned, all-Australian, Imtrade Australia Company, Dr Ross Rainbird is one scientist and corporate individual intent on keeping his business on home ground.

“With no affiliation to any other industry players, we have the flexibility to take our own direction unhindered by the bureaucracy of our corporate counterparts,” Dr Rainbird says.

“And while we can move into the broader export market, we keep our sights firmly placed in the

Australasian market as leaders in the field.”

This policy has served Imtrade well since its formation in 1984. The Kwinana-based plant is not only renowned for its manufacturing, research and development (R&D) proficiency, but also for its innovative approach to agricultural products and their use.

Predominantly self-sufficient in research and development programs, Imtrade makes the most of a well-resourced laboratory facility that continues to break new ground within the industry by delivering various products including herbicides, insecticides, fumigants, fungicides and growth regulators.

Their most recent success is the world’s highest loading liquid glyphosate herbicide.

“This is the culmination of five years of intensive work at the Kwinana plant and the herbicide

was granted an international patent earlier this year,” says Dr Rainbird.

The beauty of this product lies in the benefit for farmers and other industry-related professions.

“The higher loading formulation promises reduced volumes of the product as well as packaging, labelling, transport and other logistics, which we know will be welcomed by the industry.

“We are only one of three Australian Ag Chem organisations operating with our own formulation facility,” Dr Rainbird points out.

“Others get all of their products made or Toll manufactured in China, India and Australia. Imtrade used to do this, however due to quality issues with products made offshore or by Toll manufacturing, Imtrade decided it had to formulate its own products.

“I knew if we wanted to stay in this game we had to be a manufacturer, so we put a lab in, brought in a chemist and started producing.”

The laboratory came at a cost - Imtrade operated on a shoestring.

“It was a huge baptism of fire then, we didn’t have that much of an idea about manufacturing and we made so many mistakes,” Dr Rainbird recalls.

“If I had had some formal business training I would never have fallen into that ‘hole’,” he confesses.

Add to that staffing problems, compliance, occupational health and safety hitches and it became a “nightmare.”

But Dr Rainbird’s persistence won through. A move from contract workers to full-time qualified staff ensured the plant was finally on its way to being financially viable.

With a drive for research and development and protection of intellectual property - taking up chemical registrations and ultimately applying for patents - the company’s future is secured.

Two plus decades on, the company is now in the multi-million dollar turnover bracket.

Without the free university education offered by then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, life might have turned out quite differently for Dr Rainbird.

Having been a boarder at Wesley College from the age of 12 years, Dr Rainbird says he “drifted” into science at UWA.

“I did a PhD working on the efficiency of nitrogen fixation and when I was offered a job at DuPont in the States, I took it.”

For the next year Dr Rainbird enjoyed being a visiting scientist before deciding to apply for a job in California. Having been

shortlisted and interviewed Dr Rainbird reversed his decision - his wife, Janice, was pregnant.

“We came back to Australia and I took on a fly-in, fly-out position as a research consultant for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra.”

In the mid to late ‘80s Dr Rainbird joined his father-in-law’s market garden supply business, based in Midland.

“It was only going to be for a short while,” he says.

“Initially the business supplied seeds, fertilisers, hay and such-like before we started importing products required for the market gardeners.

“Having sold that business we started trading in agricultural chemicals and fertilisers and bought the Kwinana site to enable us to manufacture our own products.”

These days the company prides itself on its uniqueness or, in Dr Rainbird’s words: “uniquity!”

“The RAS will see changes taking place to ensure the future and viability of the organisation and the Show.”

“Imtrade Australia is one of the largest agricultural product registrant holders in Australia. We are well advanced in our field. The plant is capable of producing 80,000 litres per day; we have good R&D capabilities and our accreditation for GLP (good lab practice) is acceptable all over the world.

“One of the unique things about us is we look at a problem

here in Australia and develop a solution for it. If it works somewhere else in the world that is good, but we are more interested in our home turf.

“We have Australia-wide staff with sales representation and warehouses in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, as well as Perth.

“Our market is evolving dramatically. We are on the cusp of really great things. Imtrade Australia’s uniqueness places it well as a point of difference amidst a market challenged by the intrusion of overseas producers and the marketers of bare bones generic offerings.

“Our products are an important part of the farmers’ toolkit to control pests.

“Imtrade Australia’s vision is to be recognised as the leaders and innovators in solution provision and supply partnerships for the agricultural industry throughout Australasia.”

When Dr Rainbird is not behind a desk at the company’s Como office, or at the Kwinana plant, he can be found taking seriously his councillor duties at the RAS.

“I come from the country - Mt Barker - and have a working farm in that area and, as they say - ‘you can take the boy out of the country but you cannot take the country out of the boy’ so for me to be invited to be part of the RAS is an honour.

“The RAS will see changes taking place to ensure the future and viability of the organisation and the Show.

“I am excited to be part of the Strategic Planning Committee as I can add a lot of value in that area in terms of innovation and thinking outside the box.”



Knead to Succeed

Mandurah-based Miami Bakehouse is rising from strength to strength. It regularly takes out top awards at the Bread and Pastry Show, coordinated by the RAS, as well as in national contests

Former Ansett pilot David Palmer and wife Simone Sanders have been at the helm of Miami Bakehouse since 2004 and business is flying high.

Mr Palmer heads the technical and financial aspects of this WA icon while Ms Sanders, with her marketing background and an aptitude for running the day-to-day operations, leaves no crumb unturned when it comes to delivering successful new recipes and products.

The couple, who initially set out to buy a pub, according to Ms Sanders, “ended up buying the original bakery which was at Miami’s Falcon site.

“It was too good to miss so we seized the opportunity.

“David said he couldn’t cook - ‘what are we doing?’ - and I didn’t know anything about commercial baking. But David’s father, Bill, did - he originally started Granny’s Pies many years ago and guided us in many ways,” Ms Sanders says.

The couple’s varied business backgrounds helped them succeed and within two years of taking over the venture, expansion was called for.

“Although the retail side of it is still growing and continues to flourish, we outgrew the premises as a bakery. In order to maintain the quality standards we moved to a larger space at Greenfields in Mandurah,” says Ms Sanders.

“It is from here that we service all Miami Bakehouses - from Melville, Falcon, and our ‘pit stop’ along the Forrest Highway at West Pinjarra, as well as a number of resellers along the south western corridor.”

It is from this hub that Miami’s 35-strong team, including qualified bakers, apprentices, bakers’ assistants and administration staff, operates

throughout a seven-day week - 20 hour cycle.

“The first shift starts at 8am which, as bakeries go, is quite civilised,” Ms Sanders says.

“There is usually about four hours between delivery and the next shift coming in. We can run a savoury shift alongside our cake shift to ensure bread staff can start earlier in the afternoon.

“The point of difference within our kitchens is we deliberately rotate the shifts so everyone gains a good skill set, giving them versatility and the opportunity to work within bread, savoury and patisserie.

“After 11 years of being in this business it has got easier. Initially it was a steep learning curve. We effectively have four businesses in one, when you take into account at each outlet we have a bread shop, cake shop, coffee shop and gourmet pies under the umbrella of Miami Bakehouse.”

It is Miami’s attention to detail that sets it apart from competitors, and attracts the ongoing accolades.

“We bake fresh daily. We only use the best and freshest ingredients and never compromise or scrimp on quality. We use produce from Amelia Park lamb and beef to Mt Barker’s free range chicken, Plantagenet pork, fresh and local vegetables and seafood. Even the flour used is from a local miller.

“We never buy any ingredient on price. It is only on flavour and what it adds to our recipe,” Ms Sanders reveals.

She believes the Bakehouse is defined by its customers and, seemingly, the awards, which now number almost 600!

“We listen to what customers are asking for and what is trending. Every few weeks we will deliver a new pie which gives us a chance to test the recipes on

the customers and will also lead to the pie of the week. In many cases, it becomes a permanent fixture on the retail list.”

Recipes are driven with involvement from the entire baking crew and are thoroughly taste-tested before being sent to any of the shops.

“With any new product we will test it multiple times - we do a blind test and everyone gets a say as to whether we pursue the produce or tweak it and modify the recipe,” Ms Sanders says. “If it is a blanket No, and we don’t get many of those, we will ‘can’ it.”

It is little wonder unique flavours have been hitting the stores and walking straight out the doors.

“Our lasagne pie comes to mind. This was an ambitious one, made from a traditional family recipe using our own freshly made lasagne sheets and bechamel sauce. The demand exceeds supply.

“Other pastries include the gold-winner Rogan Josh - for which we won at the Royal Show as well as a national competition held in Melbourne - garlic prawn, el taco and the most recent, chicken scaloppini.

“But it doesn’t matter how many unique flavours we put into our stores, there will always be the outstanding favourites our customers always demand, including classic steak, steak, cheese and bacon, steak and mushroom and steak and onion.”

As well as pies and pastries, Miami is also famed for its extensive varieties of preservative-free bread and decadent cakes for all occasions.

There’s good news for customers who can’t get enough of the 150 products in the range. With plans for further expansion into the south-west, the company is looking forward to an even bigger bite of the pie next year.

The future looks ripe

Dustin and Martin Michael are renowned for squeezing every last drop from the 'fruit of life' – and Dustin says it is taking them to places they never dreamt of...

Welcome to
our MICRO
Juicery



Recognising a niche in the market for making and selling pure, raw, juices after just 18 months of operation the Michael brothers expanded from the family farm in Toodyay to a slick operation in the Swan Valley.

Showcasing their products at the IGA Perth Royal Show under the banner the World's Healthiest Juice Company saw supermarket chain Woolworths chase the youngsters to negotiate a deal that may well see their winning wares line the shelves of between 10 and 20 WA stores.

HERE'S TO HEALTH

The benefits will have a ripple effect on the 20 WA growers these young men source their produce from, the seven staff they employ, and others that will have to be taken on as the business grows.

However, it is the consumer who is the real winner here.

"Our juices are raw – cold pressed, untouched, no preservatives, no concentrate, not pasteurised or high-pressure processed," the older Michael brother Dustin, 26, says.

"Every juice has all the nutrients intact and is rich in enzymes – the building blocks of life."

And therein lies the sweet secret of their business success.

The boys grew up plucking oranges from the farm trees to make their own juices, killing their own meat, digging vegetables from the earth and consuming the end products of their wheat and barley crops, leaving them with a love of fresh produce.

"We are passionate about health and nutrition," stresses Dustin who, after gaining a degree in Commerce, left the family farm to travel the globe before moving in with a friend and working for an accountancy firm.

"I made C.A.B.A.L.A juice from a recipe of carrots, three varieties of apples, beetroot and lemons, told to me by a wholefood guru, and gave it to my friend, who said I should sell it as it tasted so good.

"That was a 'light bulb' moment. I quit my job and moved back home to start a juicing company."

The Rural Ambassador nominee says both he and brother Martin, 21, disregarded the advice that only Valencia oranges are good for juicing due to there being less pith in the oil, and plucked the navels from the farm trees.

They found a machine, modified it and produced a delicious and oil-less juice.

"We rented the pressing machine and a small, manual, bottling plant to avoid borrowing money. That has been our approach to business ever since," Dustin says.

Finding outlets for the juice didn't faze the brothers, who would cold-call supermarkets, undertake in-store promos and approach café and restaurant owners.

"Canning Bridge IGA was our first client – they took a dozen large and a dozen small bottles for \$120 and I still have the invoice framed in the office," he laughs.

"We would juice until midnight and take it in turns to get up at 4am to make the deliveries in an old milk van we had bought that had 500,000kms on the clock.

"We travelled from our farm 28kms north-east of Toodyay to South Perth, Applecross, Subiaco, Como, West Perth, the city and Northbridge – utilising all the trendy places.

"We did this for a year, slowly building the clientele and getting our heads around it all whilst trying to save on costs and save as much as we could to put into the business.

"All produce was selected from growers, farmers and producers within a radius of 200kms. Eventually, it became obvious we had outgrown our cool room."

Through contacts, the Michaels found a former winery in Caversham, which suits the operation perfectly.

According to these entrepreneurs, the business has been a "huge learning curve".

"Just pressing apples for juice led to us having to learn about different types of machines and modify them to enable us to press the apples effectively," says Dustin. "We could write a whole book on this," he quips.

The business now produces a whopping 3,500 litres of juice a week using up to 10 tonnes of different fruits producing eight different juices. An addition to the range – a blueberry and blackcurrant juice – will be introduced in December.

The juices are delivered to 80 cafés and restaurants and 24 independent supermarkets around Perth.

THIRSTY WORK

They have only been in their new premises for the past 18 months and now the brothers, set to be joined by their 24-year-old sister Rachel, are looking to extend their business with a new venture – a cider house and tapas bar.

"We have perfected a preservative-free cider and ginger beer and will be opening that early next year alongside the juicing business."

The business is also in the throes of a re-brand - from next month the company, keen to leave the stamp of fresh juice on everyone's lips, will be known as Michael Brothers Traditionally Pressed Juice.

Dairy Delights

TWO ENTERPRISING WOMEN ARE USING MILK FROM WA COWS TO CREATE DELICIOUS ICE CREAM THAT HAS OTHERS LICKED...

Kate Cox and Sue Eva, founders of Two Fat Cows, have found a niche for their traditional, French-style, all natural ice cream.

“It was a simple idea in the beginning,” says Mrs Cox, wife of dairy farmer Ed and mother of three girls aged 12, 11 and six-years-old.

The family live between Busselton and Margaret River on 800 acres of lush, green pasture home to 1,000 head of dairy herd, and beef cattle.

As a stay-at-home mum with a then six-month-old baby, Mrs Cox took on board her husband’s suggestion to come up with products that would add value to their milk.

The concept was appealing to close friend Sue Eva, a graphic designer working and living in Dunsborough, keen to pour her artistic bent into a fulfilling project.

“We looked at what products were available in Margaret River, at supermarkets – who was selling what locally and who was making what over east in terms of artisan ice cream,” Mrs Cox says.

“We found a niche at that time – and launched the product at the Margaret River markets.”

“We have been operating for four years now,” co-owner, Mrs Eva says. “It took a bit of time to get it up and running, a lot of research and a lot of experimentation.”

Both women used their own kitchens to trial ice cream made from the Cox’s dairy herd.

“Our milk has very high fat content and protein which is perfect for ice cream,” points out Mrs Cox.

“Our cows are fed nutritionally balanced grains, hay, silage and graze on lush grass, so they produce the optimum amount of milk. In fact, they are better fed than we are,” she quips.

“Initially we had no real idea how to make ice cream and would experiment with our table top ice cream makers looking at recipe books and the internet.

“We thought we were doing a marvellous job, and our families agreed.”

There was only one flaw.

The ice cream had a short shelf life unlike commercial ice cream which lasts for years.

So the industrious pair booked in for an ice cream course in Melbourne organised by Dairy Australia.

“We learned how to technically structure ice cream – how to hold it together, the taste and the specific ratio needed to use for ingredients. To make ice cream commercially it needs a specific ration of ingredients,” points out Mrs Eva.

Spurred on, the pair decided to convert an unused tea room on the Cox farm into a small, commercial kitchen.

One point of difference to other artisan ice creams, according to the duo, is they use only natural ingredients – from seasonal fruits sourced from around the State, with no artificial flavours, colourings or preservatives.

REAL FRUIT FLAVOURS

“We use strawberries from Albany, bananas from Carnarvon, passion fruit from local growers, the limes Kate grows on the farm, oranges from Brunswick from friends of mine, and plums from Donnybrook,” she says.

Other ingredients include homemade biscuits and brownies.

“We make our own caramel with a cinnamon toffee; we make brownies and chocolate biscuits using Belgian chocolate – we then smash them up, as we do with the pavlova we make for the passion fruit, pavlova ice cream.

“We hand-make the ice cream. It is made from a traditional, custard-based cream, eggs and milk, as well as sugar, which is a traditional French-style as opposed to Italian gelato.

“It seems to be very popular. Our ice cream has a creamier taste.”

The two enterprising women make between 50 and 100 litres a week, going up to 300 litres depending on seasonal demand.

Two Fat Cows is unapologetically more expensive than any other ice cream.

“Not only is it a more expensive exercise but it is our point of difference – other ice creameries use pre-mix, artificial flavouring and colouring mix with a machine, which is cheap and quick and the flavours are not great,” stresses Mrs Cox.



Kate Cox and Sue Eva

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Business-wise the pair, who both work two and a half days a week, are now at a crossroads.

“We are both conscious of wanting a manageable, work-life balance,” adds Mrs Cox.

“Until this year we had not taken time off. We are really conscious of giving good customer service, but we have learned to be a bit more hard-nosed. We are also not so emotional about the business anymore.”

The women credit a business mentoring company with getting them on track.

“One of the things we had to change from the beginning was to get a lot more structured,” says Mrs Eva who is responsible for the logos and packaging of the product.

“We had to become a lot more business-minded. Instead of just letting things happen we had to make plans using spreadsheets and had to get really serious with the break-down costs with every single flavour we make and how to make them in a way that is cost effective,” adds Mrs Cox.

“In the foreseeable future we intend to move more into retail

and restructure the business so we can have more of a life behind the scenes, or the sacrifice to small business is too great.”

Not that the pair are complaining – far from it.

“We are really lucky to have a good friendship and a great business,” the pair agree.

“When we stop and reflect, we have actually done really well and come so far. I don’t think there is anything we would change. It has all been a learning curve and I do not think there is any other way we would have done it.”

ON THE ROAD

The duo is now intending to take their product on the road - literally. For they will be targeting tourist areas with an ice cream van!

“Around the south we are well located to beaches and festivals, and wherever the tourists are, we will hunt them down,” smiles Mrs Cox.

If you happen to be in the vicinity try the lime and olive oil – Two Fat Cows’ signature ice cream.



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