

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **2009 PRESIDENT'S MEDAL FINALISTS ANNOUNCED**

A winery built on a neglected orchard is challenging some of Australia's most famous farming dynasties for the title of best food and wine business, \$10,000 in cash and the prestigious silver heritage President's Medal.

Paringa Estate on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula is a finalist in the 2009 President's Medal awarded by The **Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS)**, Australia's only competition pitting award winning producers from the food and wine industries against each other.

The six finalists have already received a Gold Medal for their product at one of the RAS' Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy and Fine Food Shows, but the unique President's Medal is judged on a whole-of-company approach to production and marketing of their product.

The 2009 finalists are Bulla Dairy Foods (VIC), Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture (QLD), Gundowring Fine Foods (VIC), Paringa Estate (VIC), Richard Gunner's Fine Meats (SA) and wine giant Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd (NSW).

Glenn Dudley, President of the RAS said the President's Medal recognises the multifaceted approach to food and wine production required in the competitive domestic and international market.

"It's crucial to encourage the use of sustainable practices to produce high-quality products. The President's Medal raises consumer awareness and rewards producers who use sustainable practices to develop outstanding products.

"The President's Medal is a fitting recognition for Australia's world class food and wine industries and I congratulate the six exceptional finalists. It's very exciting to see such an interesting range of products coming from small and large producers."

The President's Medal promotes and rewards profitable and sustainable Australian primary industries through a multifaceted judging process.

"Judges evaluate the product's manufacturing process for financial, social and environmental performance, as well its market acceptance. It's also important to consider the human element to reward the passion, commitment and enthusiasm of the producer," Mr Dudley said.

Each producer will be visited over the coming months by at least two judges, including Simon Marnie (ABC Radio) and Department of Primary Industries Chief Economic Analyst, Scott Davenport. The judges will review operations and observe the production practices of the finalists to gather economic, environmental and local information on the production of each Champion product.

This year, President's Medal finalists competed against 5,500 entries in the Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy and Fine Food Shows – 2355 wine entries, 2104 fine food entries and 937 dairy entries. Gold medals were awarded to 122 wine products, 54 fine food products and 73 dairy products, with 73 named Champion products.

The President's Medal is proudly supported and sponsored by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Woolworths Ltd.

### **Further media information:**

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## Who are the six finalists?

### **Bulla Dairy Foods (VIC) Premium Sour Cream**

Bulla Dairy Foods is a fifth generation Australian-owned family company making premium quality dairy products in Victoria since 1910. The company has two manufacturing plants in Colac, amid some of Australia's best dairy country. A long standing philosophy to create innovative product ranges and invest regularly in production equipment has led the company to expand its iconic cream product range into ice cream, chilled and frozen yoghurt, cottage cheese and sour cream. Bulla Dairy Foods' Premium Sour Cream was awarded ***Champion Cream or Dairy Dessert at the 2009 Sydney Royal Cheese and Dairy Produce Show.***

### **GOLD COAST MARINE AQUACULTURE (QLD) Cooked Black Tiger Prawns U10**

Founded in 1986 by Noel Herbst on cane land adjacent to the Logan river, Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture began a relatively small venture growing Black Tiger prawns and now employs 40 staff to manage its output of nearly 500 tonnes each year. Noel's family has farmed the area since 1863 and the business still employs four other Herbst family members.

Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture has entered products in the Sydney Royal Fine Food Show since Aquaculture was first involved in 2001. In 2009 product innovation remains a priority for Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture, nominated for its Cooked Black Tiger Prawns U10 which was awarded a ***Champion Prawn Exhibit at the 2009 Sydney Royal Fine Food Show.***

### **GUNDOWRING FINE FOODS (VIC) Licorice Ice Cream**

Gundowring Fine Foods is the business of the Crooke family, run from the family's historic dairy property in North East Victoria's Kiewa Valley. In 2004 fourth generation producers Sarah and Stephen Crooke diversified to create Gundowring Ice Cream, churning out artisan ice cream from a purpose-built facility on the farm.

Innovation, rigorous quality control, hard work and passion have resulted in an eclectic range of award winning flavours including raspberry, toasted honey and walnut, chocolate, ginger and coconut, with seasonal flavours orange and cardamom, fig, rhubarb and lime. Gundowring was nominated for its licorice ice cream, which was awarded ***Champion Ice Cream at the 2009 Sydney Royal Cheese and Dairy Produce Show.***

### **PARINGA ESTATE (VIC) 2006 Estate Shiraz**

Paringa Estate winery was established on a once derelict orchard in 1985 by owner and winemaker Lindsay McCall. The first vintage was produced in 1988 with 3 tonnes of fruit. Paringa Estate now manages over 55 acres of vineyard and processes more than 220 tones of fruit, or 16,000 cases of wine.

Paringa Estate is predominately known for Pinot Noir, however in recent years Paringa's Shiraz has been heavily awarded. At the 2009 Sydney Royal Wine Show Paringa Estate won five trophies including Best Pinot Noir, Best Shiraz and Best Wine of the Show with their 2006 Estate Shiraz, which was also named ***Macquarie Group Perpetual Trophy for Best Wine of the Show at the 2009 Macquarie Group Sydney Royal Wine Show.***

### **RICHARD GUNNER'S FINE MEATS (SA) Hay Valley Lamb**

Richard Gunner's Fine Meats is a family paddock-to-plate meat business located on South Australia's Limestone Coast. The company supplies some of Australia's most demanding chefs with products like its President's Medal nominated Hay Valley Lamb.

The company retails and wholesales four branded meat products grown on its own farms and provides a path to market for seven other like-minded farm-based meat production businesses. Continually testing its processes and products, the business focuses sharply on environmental issues and humane livestock management to ensure an ethical and sustainable future. ***Grand Champion Branded Lamb Exhibit at the 2008 Sydney Royal Fine Food Show.***

### **TYRRELL'S VINEYARDS PTY LTD (NSW) Vat 1 Semillon 2005**

Tyrrell's Wines is an Australian icon. The company was established in 1858 and today Tyrrell's vineyards extend from their legendary home in the Hunter Valley to other distinguished grape growing regions of Australia including McLaren Vale (South Australia) and Heathcote (Victoria).

Now headed by fourth generation family member, Managing Director Bruce Tyrrell, the company is nominated for its Vat 1 Semillon 2005. Tourists can still see the first Semillon vines planted in 1927 in the legendary Short Flat vineyard that houses company founder Edward Tyrrell's bark hut.

Today the fifth generation of Tyrrells works in the business and the company exports wines to over 30 countries. ***Albert Chan Trophy for Best White Wine of the Show at the 2009 Macquarie Group Sydney Royal Wine Show.***

REWARDING EXCELLENCE IN AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE