



MEDIA RELEASE

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GLOBAL TRENDS AND COUNTRY'S BEST DAZZLE AT FINE FOOD AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, a city known for its culinary prowess, this week welcomed a vibrant display of the country's food culture with the return of Fine Food Australia to the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. A testament to the show's ongoing relevance to the industry, visitor numbers remained strong across the four-day event, with over 26,000 visitors despite the exceptionally cold and wet spring weather.

The country's biggest food trade event and now in its 32nd year, 2016's Fine Food Australia proved to be another exceptional show with a stellar showcase of exhibitors, products and the country's best. Although well into its third decade, this year's show still offered a host of first time happenings.

It was the inaugural year for the Devondale Café Stage and Roasters Lane – a dedicated show area for all things coffee and tea. The café stage also hosted another show first – the World Tea Championship. With recent statistics showing just how much Australians enjoy their cuppas, it made sense that finding the country's best took place at Australia's biggest food trade show. 20-year-old South Yarra local Ayden Graham came out on top, impressing judges with a black tea hailing from a rural Chinese village – truly a showcase of how global our food industry has become. International trends were also showcased in the Flavours of the World area, which dazzled with bright colours and some of the newest food and innovations from around the globe that had visitors intrigued!

Another show first was the Footy Pie Competition, a new category within the much-loved Official Great Aussie Pie Competition. Tapping into the biggest sporting events of the year, the Footy Pie Competition put team allegiances to the test as entrants put their best mince pie and team colours up for judging. Winners included Oven Crisp Bakery from Bull Creek, WA for Best Plain Pie and Pinjarra Bakery & Patisserie from Pinjarra WA for their Sydney Swans themed Footy Pie.

The delegation of European Union to Australia hosted a seminar on how Australian producers of agricultural and food products could benefit from a system of geographical indications (GIs). Opened by Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, the Hon Philip Dalidakis, visitors learned how GIs are a powerful tool for rural development and increasing economic activity.

Fine Food Australia also hosted a cocktail function, providing a fantastic opportunity for industry members to network over drinks as they discuss business, products and innovation. The function also held the announcement of the Best New Product Award winners for 2016, the annual awards that recognize the best products that have entered the industry in the past 12 months.

In addition to the great products and competitive spirit on display, over \$100 million dollars of business took place on the show floor, along with over 80 educational sessions with leading chefs, industry experts and leaders. For Event Director Minnie Constan, the show marked another year that proving Australia's food industry to be one of the biggest and brightest.

“The international exhibitors are always really exciting, but what is equally exciting is that our regional producers matched them with their innovation, flavours and products. From healthy food trends such as matcha and kombucha, to some of Australia's locals proving their hand at pizza making and tea brewing with incredible results, the future of Australia's food industry has never looked brighter. Fine Food Australia is proud to not just be the host, but also the platform boosting this sector to continue to be at the forefront of the global industry.”

Other show highlights include Pizza Revolution's championships and acrobatic demonstrations featuring European champion Youssef Ben Tuati, the Women in Foodservice Charity Event featuring guests Nahji Chu, Alla Wolf-Tasker and Philippa Grogan, Australian Culinary Federation's Culinary Challenge and the truly delectable demonstrations at both the Bulla Pastry Stage and Bulla Family Dairy stand.

Next year's 2017 Fine Food Australia is already hotly anticipated, and will take place in Sydney at the newly built International Convention Centre Darling Harbour. With a sparkling new venue, it will be another show of opportunities to build relationships, drive businesses and be inspired about the industry.

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