

Best Aussie charcuterie products announced

The stellar quality of Australian smallgoods was on show in Sydney last night at the 2024 Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards (ACEA), with producers nationwide celebrated for their exceptional craftsmanship and innovative, world-class products.

Hosted by the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) in partnership with Australian Pork Limited and MLA, the Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards are now into their third year, having launched in 2022.

The awards night was held at Shangri-La Hotel, with 32 category champions announced across 35 categories.

From traditional ham and bacon to unique specialty smallgoods such as duck terrine, beef cheese and jalapeno kabana, and wagyu bresaola, more than 800 products were entered into this year's awards, with producer representation from all states.

The ACEA are designed to recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of Australia's smallgoods manufacturers, as well as elevating Australian charcuterie as a premium, high quality and exciting product category for consumers.

The lineup of judges consisted of fleischmeisters (master butchers), award-winning and celebrity chefs, artisan smallgoods makers and industry legends.

Renowned Sydney-based chef Adam Moore was on the judging panel for the awards and says this year's entrants displayed innovation and craftsmanship.

"It was great to see entrants using foundational recipes, and then being really creative by adding in native ingredients, or ingredients not normally seen in the charcuterie world," Moore says.

Moore said the judging panel "didn't see a bad category" this year, with producers having fine-tuned techniques to create a high calibre of products across all ACEA categories.

"In Australia, we have some amazing artisans and producers that are creating phenomenal products which have a place on everyone's table, and really improve that whole flavour and sensory experience of charcuterie," he says.

"Having awards like these change the game, not only in retail, but in terms of influencing what chefs buy, and what consumers love."

AMIC National Smallgoods Council Chair and head judge Franz Knoll was impressed by the competition standard this year, with 17 entrants not losing a single point in the judging process.

“Rather than building up points to be named a winner, the expectation is that you make a great product, and then there are deductions from that perfect score,” he says.

“We as judges invest so much time into critiquing each product, so we can identify areas where producers can improve. Overall, that leads to the standard being improved every year.”

Knoll says the awards were an integral part of AMIC’s goal to help consumers recognise excellent smallgoods products and expand consumer knowledge of charcuterie options for various meals.

“Ham and bacon are people’s go-to charcuterie product, but the personality and character of the industry doesn’t come from those, it comes from the unique products that producers and chefs add flavour to, and that skill drives how people consume it,” he says.

“Our job is to make these products more of an everyday-use ingredient for any occasion, rather than something consumers like but only eat if someone else cooks it.”

Following the awards dinner last night, AMIC is running its 2024 Smallgoods Summit, being held today in Sydney.

Oliver Stankovski, AMIC’s General Manager – Smallgoods adds that next year, winners of gold medals will become eligible to enter IFFA, the leading international trade fair for the meat and protein industry, which takes place every three years, and will be held in Frankfurt.

“In 2025, it will be the first time that Australia will enter our award-winning smallgoods products into the competition and will give all our gold medal winners the chance to be recognised on the world stage. It will be highly competitive, but our award-winning products are a strong symbol of Australian excellence and innovation, and we’re excited to see them do well against our global counterparts.

“Australian consumers can be confident when they see an ACEA medal branded on its packaging they’ll be purchasing a product that represents the pinnacle of industry standards and quality,” Oliver says.

For more info on the awards, visit <https://amic.org.au/charcuterie-excellence-awards-2024/>

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