

WINNER

RAS President's Medal

DRAWING FROM 5300 ENTRIES, ALMOST 500 CLASSES, AND 85 CHAMPION PRODUCTS, SIX FINALISTS COMPETED FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY'S PREMIER TITLE. THE WINNER OF THE 2018 RAS OF NSW PRESIDENT'S MEDAL IS...

Words **Natalie Millhouse**



Left to right: Brasserie Bread's co-founder and baker Michael Klausen celebrates the RAS of NSW President's Medal win at the event held during the Sydney Royal Easter Show; Michael with the coveted RAS President's Medal; a few slices above – Brasserie bread's award-winning loaf.

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) President's Medal tests Champion medal-winners through a unique and rigorous judging process. That is, the prestigious medal "recognises Australian producers that create the highest quality products by sustainable means, optimising excellence in food production," says RAS President, Robert Ryan OAM.

A WINNER IS CROWNED

Part of the Sydney Royal Easter Show, this year's President's Medal was awarded at a gala dinner prepared by guest chef, Colin Fassnidge and Tim Browne, Executive Chef, RAS of NSW. The decadent feast featured produce from all six medal-contenders and was attended by some of the food and wine industry's most iconic figures, including *Selector's* own beloved contributor, and Chair of the RAS Fine Food Committee, Lyndey Milan OAM.

"This year's finalists exemplify what the President's Medal was designed to recognise," said Lyndey of the six

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culinary Champions. "Every producer has a deep understanding of their social, environmental and commercial setting." For delighting food-lovers with their produce, actively supporting and engaging with farmers, and giving back to the community – the 12th Annual President's Medal winner is Brasserie Bread.

An innovative Sydney-based bakery, Brasserie Bread was founded in 1995 by baker Michael Klausen and business partner Tony Pappas. Their unique approach to creating artisan breads that 'speak of the sun, the weather and the soil

from where the wheat is grown' is evident in their Champion sourdough, which boasts a generous lift, delicate crumb, appealing nuttiness, earthy characters, and a wonderfully waxy texture.

A FEEL GOOD STORY

Brasserie Bread's story is so much more than the impeccable quality of their Champion sourdough. In addition to the President's Medal win, Brasserie Bread were also awarded the Department of Primary Industry's Innovation Award at this year's event.

"Michael actually approached wheat growers in numerous states to get them to produce a strain specifically for a bread made from a single origin. That is the ultimate in provenance of food and that is what really underpins the President's Medal," Lyndey said of the Danish-born baker's approach.

For example, Brasserie Bread's Champion Flinders Ranges Sprouted Wheat Loaf is produced in close collaboration with a Flinders Ranges



wheat farmer, Andrew Byerlee. Andrew's skills ensure the resultant single origin loaf evokes the regional characteristics of his farmland, allowing the Katana wheat to shine alongside the bread's other key ingredient, Murray River salt.

Reflecting on Brasserie Bread's multiple-win, Michael said,

"When you are passionate and working on an idea/dream you forget sometimes how big it really is.

"Today we can now put a loaf of bread on the table and tell you what paddock it is from and that is extremely important. Receiving the innovation award was also

a personal win, for six years I have pushed the boundaries of the whole industry and to be recognised is amazing."

Michael and his dedicated team that every day work on making remarkable bread in all three bakeries plan to put the \$10,000 prize money towards a wheat breeding program, with Michael currently taste-testing 50 different wheat varieties to seek out richness and complexity of flavour. The future of dough is certainly assured with Brasserie Bread.

Brasserie Bread's range can be enjoyed at their bakery direct, at select outlets in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Clockwise from top left: Brasserie Bread baker and co-founder Michael Klausen with a loaf of his finest; Shining accolade – the RAS President's Medal; The Brasserie Bread team with their wheat farmers; Winners are grinners (left to right) Executive chef Tim Browne, RAS of NSW President's Medal judge Ed Halmagyi, Chair of the RAS Fine Food Committee, Lyndey Milan OAM, Michael Klausen; Guest chef Colin Fassnidge.