



Cuisine Artisan Awards 2009

Cuisine magazine is on the hunt for New Zealand's local food heroes to be recognised in the inaugural *Cuisine* Artisan Awards 2009, in association with the super premium wine, Selaks Founders Reserve.



The newly established *Cuisine* Artisan Awards will acknowledge New Zealand's best artisan food and beverage producers who are defining the country's flourishing food and farmers' market culture — creating top-notch locally produced fare. An artisan producer is essentially a craftsman who applies their skills to making handmade or individually crafted products, generally on a small scale and often according to traditional practices.

"From craft bakers, olive oil producers and chutney and jam preservers to charcuterie experts and boutique brewers — there are skilled artisans popping up around the country," says *Cuisine* deputy food editor Fiona Smith. "We felt it was high time that these talented artisans and the fruits of their labour were recognised.

"New Zealand is a country that is renowned for the exceptional quality of our fresh produce — fruit and vegetables, meat and seafood and dairy. This is a great foundation for our local food producers to add value. The rise and rise of farmers' markets and the immense popularity that they have experienced have given artisan food producers an avenue to sell directly to customers and given people access to excellent locally produced food.

"You don't need to look to Italy for olive oil and salami, or France for fine mustard any more — these are being produced by skilled craftspeople just down the road with their own distinct Kiwi identity," she says.

Selaks Founders Reserve senior winemaker, Brett Fullerton, says New Zealand wine, farmers' markets and local artisan food are all very closely intertwined.

"In sponsoring these awards, Selaks wanted to show its support for the flourishing artisan food industry in New Zealand. It's exciting to see artisans forging regional culinary identities and local pride, just as the wine industry has done in many regions. For a long time we have graced winemakers with deserving accolades. Now it's time to recognise our local food heroes too," he says.

To help in the search for the country's finest artisans, *Cuisine* is calling on their readers to nominate their local food heroes. The artisans must be producing food or beverage products on a small scale with an annual turnover of less than \$5 million to 30 June 2008. Artisan producers can enter a wide range of product categories including dairy, preserves and condiments; oils such as olive, avocado or walnut; honey, mustards, seafood and meat goods, baked goods, speciality chocolates, drinks, fruit juices and boutique beer.

A panel of experts will judge the nominees and 10 winners, including a supreme winner, will be announced in the March issue of *Cuisine*, on sale mid-February 2009.

The judging panel includes *Cuisine's* Fiona Smith, Toni Mason, Ray McVinnie and Lauraine Jacobs, as well as Selaks head winemaker Brett Fullerton, founder of Delmaine Enzo Bettio, co-owner of Logan Brown Restaurant in Wellington, Al Brown, and Farmers' Market New Zealand chairperson Chris Fortune.

To nominate a favourite artisan producer send an email naming the company and the specific product/s you think should be entered to artisans@cuisine.co.nz before Friday 7 November 2008.