

**The 26th
Australian Golden Olive Awards**



2024

Results

2024 Australian Golden Olive Awards

The Australian Golden Olive Awards results for 2024 particularly heartening. Olive Lace Bug continues to reduce yields and, in many cases, leave groves with virtually no saleable olive oil. Despite this we have seen a great performance with the olive oils submitted. Of the 45 olive oils entered just over 30% were assessed by our judges as being of Gold Medal standard.

The 2024 Australian landscape really has been a tough one for olive growers. Whilst Olive Lace Bug caused a great deal of grief on the eastern side of the country, South Australia and Canberra were hit by a late frost just as buds were forming reducing much of their yield. Meanwhile Western Australia suffered strong hot winds during flowering reducing what they had to harvest.

One of the significant activities that occurs during the year is that by virtue of running the Australian Golden Olive Awards, my wife Melanie as Chief Steward and myself are in contact with many groves right across the country. For countless small groves (and for some of the larger established groves) we serve as a sounding board for the challenges growers face. It can be reassuring for a grower just starting out to discover that the problems they are confronting are the same problems being faced by many other growers across their region or across Australia.

I think many of you have spoken to Melanie throughout the years and benefited from those conversations. Whether it is advice on how to deal with particular pests and diseases or who to speak to regarding packaging needs or what a fair price for your olive oil in the local market, I know Melanie has been able to serve as a great starting point. Similarly, I wish to acknowledge our association with the Goulburn Strathbogie Olive Growers Association with their organising of field days. If you haven't been to one of their field days and you are in the region they are well worth attending. When a field day is scheduled we will issue a notice to members of Olive Producers North East Victoria (OPNEV), the organisers of the Australian Golden Olive Awards.

To close, if I have one piece of guidance it is to look at how you went this year. Did you get the quantity and quality of olives you sought. Was this consistent with other growers? In other words yields were down across the board so you would expect to be down too but were you rock bottom or just off your normal harvest? Consider what the weather has been like and how it has differed from previous years. Did you manage your grove differently? Take all of this and learn from it. The grower who simply keeps doing the same thing every year without learning will inevitably face the greatest challenges and to an extent probably find less satisfaction from running their grove. For me my lesson has been to look at your grove and try to find little glitches and seek to understand them because in a couple of years they could be your big problems. Happy growing!

Rob Whyte – President, Olive Producers NE Victoria

Message From the Chief Judge – Trudie Michaels

The judges and I would like to thank you all for entering this year's Australian Golden Olive Awards. Thank you also to the Australian Golden Olives Awards organisers for entrusting us with the always important task of judge your entries.

We appreciate it has been a very tricky harvest for many growers this year. Many have managed to overcome frost, floods, hailstorms, olive lace bug and anthracnose to produce some delicious olive oils. Well done!

Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)

Of the 41 EVOO entries, it was great to see that 38 were awarded a medal (93%). It was also a thrill to award 12 EVOO golds (29% of entries). This highlights that producers are trying harder than ever to produce the best olive oils they can. A great outcome. These oils had great complexity and harmony on the nose and palate as well as a delicious texture and long finish. 46% of EVOO entries were awarded a silver and 17% a bronze. Two oils were not awarded a medal and only one was withdrawn due to a fault.

In general, this year's olive oils offered fresh, clean and bright aromas that transferred well to the palate. The dominant aroma profile was tropical fruits, tomato and apple. Last year the oils tended to be on the greener more vegetal spectrum. It was also a treat to taste oils that were, on average, milder in polyphenol levels compared to recent years. This makes the job of judging a great deal easier.

Many of the oils also had a zingy astringency on the palate. This usually comes from olives that are picked more on the green side. The greener the olives, the higher the level of astringency. In many cases, this astringency was well balanced with good fruit, mouthfeel, bitterness and pepper. It contributed to greater complexity in the olive oil. In other cases, the astringency overpowered the fruit and left a very unpleasant grippy drying effect on the palate.

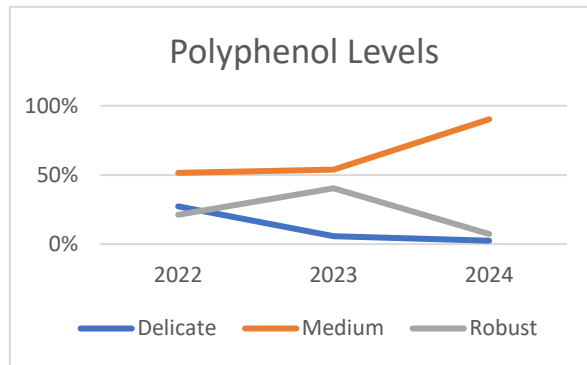
Flavoured Oils

Only a small class this year but all were awarded a medal. Two Golds and two Bronzes. Although one Gold was an Agrumato/Co-pressed olive oil and one Gold Medal was an infused oil, all judges agreed that the Gold Medal flavoured oils had a great purity of flavour, intensity and finesse. Such a pleasure to taste.

Thank you once again for entrusting us to taste and judge your wonderful 2024 olive oils. Well done everyone for this particularly tricky season.

Statistical Analysis of Results

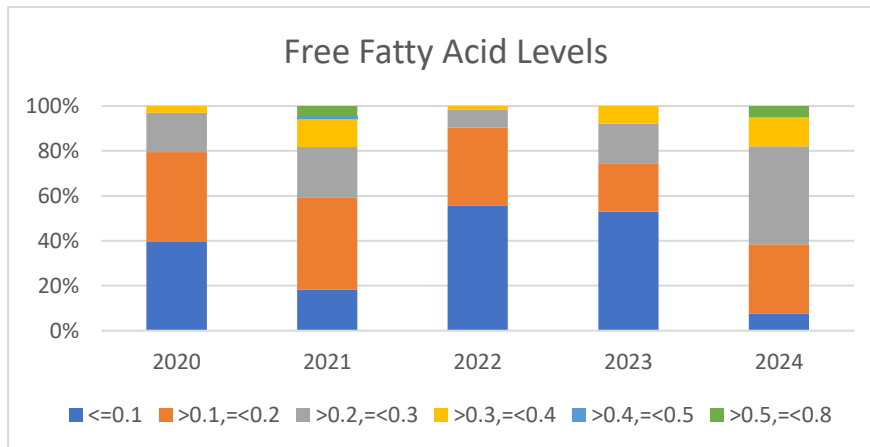
The following graphs provide some insight into the polyphenol and Free Fatty Acid levels with the olive oils that have been entered into the Australian Golden Olive Awards over the last 3 years. This first section looks at polyphenol levels. For each year the percentage of olive oils are displayed which were classified delicate, medium or robust. What this suggests is that we have had a lot more medium bodied olive oils compared to the previous 2 years.



Lowest Polyphenol – 147 harvested 16th May

Highest Polyphenol – 394 harvested 14th May

The other parameter examined is Free Fatty Acid levels. This is of particular interest as it reflects the freshness and quality of the fruit upon pressing. The chart below reflects the percentage of olive oils entered in the Australian Golden Olive Awards within specific levels of FFA. The lower the more desirable.



If we treat our objective as trying to have FFA below 0.2% (the standard requires less than 0.8%) you can see the level has been dropping for the past 3 years. Whilst not conclusive this could be a result of Olive Lace Bug putting stress on trees. Even though a grove may not be decimated by OLB it can still have the pest present, impacting on fruit. Remember though this is just a suggestion, but it should be regarded as a red flag that an important parameter of our olive oils is changing in an undesirable direction. Good health of trees coupled with prompt processing to oil will help keep FFA low.

Class Winners

Class winners are only awarded where a Gold Medal is awarded in a particular category. No winners were placed for Group 1 Micro Volume. The descriptions below are those provided by the judges.

Best Oil In Show

Rio Vista Olives – Hardys Mammoth

Judges Description-Fresh and intense aromas of passionfruit, lime, and lemon gelato aromas with hints of citrus, green and gold kiwi, and white pepper. Transfers to an equally fragrant palate with the addition of cut grass, green apple, and citrus juice. A delicious textural and light mouth feel, balanced bitterness, and heat with a very long lingering flavour. A fabulous oil.

Small Volume (Group 2)

Wangandary Olives- Frantoio, Nevadillo, Blanco, Manzanillo,

Hardys Mammoth Blend

Judges Description-Fresh fig leaf, tomato vine and artichoke, tropical fruit, and hints of guava and floral blossom. Transfers to a full palate with fig leaf, citrus, rosewater, green bean, and green tea. Vibrant bitterness and heat that lingers. Complex and intriguing.

Large Volume (Group 3)

Rio Vista Olives – Hardys Mammoth

Tasting notes refer Best Oil in Show

Heritage Trees (Group 4)

Grampians Olive Co – Delicate Blend

Judges Description-Sweet refreshing nose with fresh grassy notes, tomato leaf, tobacco, lemon verbena, basil, and blossoms. Transfers to a palate with fresh intensity, sweet red fruit flavours and green tomato on the palate. A lovely gentle bitterness and pungency. Good length, clean mouthfeel.

Agrumato Oil (Group 5)

Lisadurne Hill – Lime

Judges Description-Fresh vibrant lime nose with hints of lime blossom, kaffir lime leaf and lime curd. Great transfer to a like palate with a creamy mouthfeel. A long lingering lime flavoured finish with a warm pithy bitterness and mild pepper. Delicious.

Infused Oil (Group 6)

Gooramadda Olives – Rosemary & Thyme

Judges Description-Thyme dominant oil with hints of rosemary. Beautiful fragrant nose transfers to a clean herby palate with a good purity of flavour a balance of fresh thyme and rosemary. Lingering gentle flavoursome finish with a balanced bitterness and heat.

Best New Producer-Not Awarded in 2024

Processor of the Year

EV Olives - Markwood, Victoria

Table of Class Winners

| AWARD | Class | Grove | Variety / Name | Score |
|-----------------------|-------|--------------------|---|-------|
| Best Oil In Show | 3 | Rio Vista Olives | Hardys Mammoth | 90 |
| Small Volume | 2 | Wangandary Olives | Frantoio/Nevadillo Blanco Manzanillo/Hardys Mammoth Blend | 88 |
| Large Volume | 3 | Rio Vista Olives | Hardys Mammoth | 90 |
| Heritage Trees | 4 | Grampians Olive Co | Delicate Blend | 86 |
| Agrumato Oil | 5 | Lisadurne Hill | Lime | 88 |
| Infused Oil | 6 | Gooramadda Olives | Rosemary & Thyme | 86 |
| Best New Producer | n/a | Not Awarded | n/a | |
| Processor of the Year | n/a | EV Olives | Markwood, Victoria | n/a |

Gold Medal Winners

| Grove | Class | Class Description | Oil Name | Score |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---|--|-------|
| Grampians Olive Co | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Delicate | 86 |
| Myrtlevale Olives | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Manzanillo/Hardys Mammoth/UC13A6 | 86 |
| Gooramadda Olives | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Hardys Mammoth | 87 |
| Gidge Springs Extra Virgin Olive Oil | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Leccino/Frantoio | 88 |
| Wangandary Olives | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Frantoio/Nevadillo Blanco /Manzanillo/Hardys Mammoth Blend | 88 |
| Barfold Olives | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Chef's Choice - Frantoio/Corregiola/Manzanillo /Picual | 86 |
| Rio Vista | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Signore | 86 |
| Taralinga Estate | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Picual | 86 |
| Wangrove | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Nevadillo Blanco, Priola, Frantoio | 87 |
| Paringa Ridge Pty Ltd. | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Picual | 88 |
| Rio Vista | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Hardys Mammoth | 90 |
| Rich Glen | 4 | Heritage Trees | Coratina Early Harvest T9 | 89 |
| Lisadurne Hill | 5 | Agrumato Olive Oil | Lime | 88 |
| Gooramadda Olives | 6 | Flavoured Olive Oil | Rosemary & Thyme | 86 |

Silver Medal Winners

| Grove | Class | Class Description | Oil Name | Score |
|---------------------|-------|---|------------------------|-------|
| EV Olives | 4 | Heritage Trees - 50 years or older | Frantoio | 76 |
| Fedra Grove | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Jeffs Blend - Frantoio | 76 |
| Lisadurne Hill | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Signore | 76 |
| Oils of Milawa | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Leccino | 76 |
| Luigi's Farm | 1 | Micro Volume 25 to 99 litres produced | Frantoio Blend | 77 |
| Rio Vista | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Classic | 78 |
| Upton Grove | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Corregiola | 79 |
| Gooramadda Olives | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Classic | 80 |
| Gooramadda Olives | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Manzanillo | 80 |
| Grampians Olive Co | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Signature | 81 |
| Rio Vista | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Koroneiki | 81 |
| Oils of Milawa | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Barnea | 82 |
| Rich Glen | 4 | Heritage Trees - 50 years or older | Kalamata T6 | 82 |
| Myrtlevalle Olives | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Corregiola | 83 |
| Oils of Milawa | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Frantoio | 84 |
| Punchbowl Hill EVOO | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Manzanillo | 84 |
| Rich Glen | 4 | Heritage Trees - 50 years or older | Frantoio/Coratina T3 | 84 |
| Rich Glen | 4 | Heritage Trees - 50 years or older | Signature T7 | 84 |
| Lisadurne Hill | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Picual/Picholine | 85 |

Bronze Medal Winners

| Grove | Class | Class Description | Oil Name | Score |
|-------------------------------|-------|---|--|-------|
| Jay Fak | 1 | Micro Volume 25 to 99 litres produced | Manzanillo, Frantioi , Picual | 69 |
| Myrree Extra Virgin Olive Oil | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Corregiola | 65 |
| Paradox Olive Grove | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Picual/Koroneki/Hojiblanca | 68 |
| Oils of Milawa | 2 | Small Volume - 100 to 999 litres produced | Mission | 68 |
| Calabaro Olive Grove | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Frantoio/Leccino/Manzanillo/Kalamata Blend | 70 |
| Barfold Olives | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Intense - Frantoio/Corregiola/Nevadillo Blanco | 69 |
| Fedra Grove | 3 | Large Volume - 1000 litres or more produced | Fedra Extra Virgin - Frantoio | 70 |
| Fedra Grove | 6 | Flavoured Olive Oil | Wild Lime & Chilli | 70 |
| Fedra Grove | 6 | Flavoured Olive Oil | Garlic & Thyme With Oregano | 69 |