



VITALE BARBERIS CANONICO WOOL EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2015

"A Recognition of Excellence in Wool"

The presentation of the annual *Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Award* has been awarded for 2015. Two representatives from Vitale Barberis Canonico (VBC) were present at the gala function alongside selected wool producer finalists from NSW, Victoria and Tasmania.

Wool producers attending the prestigious event have been specially selected by Vitale Barberis Canonico as preferred suppliers of the highest quality raw material and therefore members of the *Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Club*. Club members are chosen using set criteria for wool quality, sustainable wool production and notably the attributes of saxon Merino superfine wool which is most highly regarded by *Vitale Barberis Canonico* for their high-end fabric production.

Mr Alberto Barberis Canonico and Mr Davide Fontaneto (Raw Material Procurement Manager), were on hand from Vitale Barberis Canonico to present the award. This year's finalists hailed from three of the major superfine wool producing areas of Australia, namely the Central Tablelands of NSW, Western Victoria and the Southern Midlands of Tasmania.

2014/15 Finalists:

- Daryl & Irene Croake, "Oak Hills", Pyramul (near Mudgee), NSW;
- Everard & Matthew Linke and family, "Glenholme", Tarrington, Victoria;
- Desmond Manning & family, "Miena", Lemont, Tasmania.

These family farms are long-time producers of quality superfine wool whose owners have never deviated from breeding and preparing wool clips of the highest standard.

The eventual winners were Tasmanian saxon breeders, the Manning family, "Miena", Lemont in the southern midlands of the island state. The property which is currently operated by three generations of the Manning family is headed by the 92 year old patriarchal figure of Mr Desmond Manning. Hard work and some may say stubborn tenacity has culminated in the receiving of this prestigious award. Speaking from the "Miena" woolshed on a recent visit by Alberto Barberis and Davide Fontaneto, Des Manning recalled when he first fell in love with saxon wool as an eight year old.



*Desmond Manning, of "Miena", Lemont,
Tasmania*

"I remember watching a St James ram, just purchased from Winton by my father, being shorn. After watching that beautiful wool fall all around that sheep I knew that growing this type of wool was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Yes, some may call me crazy and stubborn, but I know these sheep do well in this country, and it is wonderful to have our wool recognised in this way," Des said.

His daughter, Marie Boadle, who has taken over the wool classing and assists her father in breeding decisions, was elated after being announced the 2015 winner.

"We felt so honoured just to be considered as a finalist. To be the winner is such a wonderful feeling for the whole family. But it is particularly exciting for Dad. It validates his long held conviction to run these sheep and to produce this particular type of wool," Marie added.



Marie Boadle, of "Miena", Lemont, Tasmania.

Watch the video about the Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Award 2015 winners on YouTube. Click here to download a high resolution version of the image above.

"Miena" began as a 400-acre Soldier's Settlement block Des was offered after returning from the Korean war around 1953. However Des started his experience with wool well before this being a shepherd in the area. Des, and his fondly remembered wife, Lois, were a real team according to Michael Manning, Des' son.

"They worked the land together. Mum was not afraid to get her hands dirty," Michael said. "Miena now consists of 3,550ha (9,000ac) and runs 12,000 superfine saxon sheep which is not a bad effort from its small and humble beginnings. My son James also works on the property so there is a good future here."

To recognise the very best wool clip suitable for Vitale Barberis Canonico, the awardee was presented with an all-expenses-paid visit to Italy to meet with Vitale Barberis Canonico representatives and to experience firsthand the wonderful transformation of the highest quality raw material into some of the most luxurious fabrics in the world.

Most notably, the Mannings also received a monetary reward of \$50,000 based on the delivered value of over 175 bales purchased by Vitale Barberis Canonico in the 2014/2015 season.

The VBC Wool Excellence Award is just one of an array of initiatives created by the company to encourage saxon wool producers. The Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Club members benefit from special purchase contracts at significant premiums to the physical market and regular Club meetings where information can be shared between members and with Vitale Barberis Canonico.

Mr Alberto Barberis Canonico explained the reasoning behind the creation of the Wool Excellence Club, and the financial opportunities it afforded to its members. "We do not see it so much as an obligation. It is not a moral thing. It is thinking to the future, for both our company and for those growers who wish to work with us," he said.

Mr Davide Fontaneto, who is in charge of all raw material purchasing and processing, made a passionate speech outlining his goals for the VBC Wool Excellence Club and its members.

"VBC believes in the wool you produce. We can now give a better service to our customers by providing them the excellence of our fabrics, through the excellence of your wool. We are creating a direct line between the source and the consumer," Mr Fontaneto said. "We have made a substantial financial commitment that puts the purchase of these wools at 25-30% more than the market."

Second place was awarded to Daryl and Irene Croake, "Oak Hills", Pyramul (via Mudgee NSW). The Croakes run 1,200 sheep on 242ha (615ac). The property is 1,000m above sea level and is covered in predominantly native grasses. The Croakes are no strangers to the podium having received numerous awards for fleece, bale and whole-clip competitions over a number of years.

Third place went to the Linke family, "Glenholme", Tarrington (near Hamilton VIC). Glenholme is a family affair as well with Everard Linke and his son Matthew working closely together on their 220ha (560ac) block and are assisted by Everard's wife Marilyn and daughter Olivia, especially at shearing time. Everard does all the shearing whilst Matthew oversees the classing and preparation of the clip.

"Shearing can go on for weeks, even months," said Matthew. "Every fleece here is treated with the utmost care and respect."

All members of the Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Club need to be accredited under the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme, an initiative developed and managed by New England Wool and strongly supported by Vitale Barberis Canonico This is a scheme promoting ethical, environmental and high quality wool production.

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About Vitale Barberis Canonico

For more than 350 years, the wool mill of Vitale Barberis Canonico has been creating prestigious textiles for the clothing industry in the historical factory in Pratrivero, Piedmont, Italy. Vitale Barberis Canonico employs more than 400 employees, has 40 agents throughout the world, and produces fabrics from two state-of-the-art factories in the Biella region. Vitale Barberis Canonico is among the top companies across the world in regards to technology and business management producing prestigious textiles completely made in Italy and is the largest exporter on a global level in terms of both value and quantity.

Heritage, Innovation and Elegance are the key words of the company philosophy.

In 2014, production reached over 7.5 million metres, and the turnover rose to € 116 m (in contrast to € 107 m in 2013). In October 2013 Vitale Barberis Canonico became a member of the international club Les Hénokiens, a Club reserved for family companies with at least two hundred years' history.