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MORE THAN PEAS AND POTATOES

Gone are the days when your local greengrocer sold one variety of potato, fresh peas and cabbage were the norm, tomatoes were only available in the warmer months and strawberries were considered a luxury.

To meet the demand of today's customer, Greengrocers stock in excess of 300 different lines of fresh fruit and vegetables, stores trade seven days a week, customer service is more than a quick chat at the checkout, and marketing has gone beyond a few posters.

With an ever increasing awareness of a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables, Sydney Markets Limited the operator of Australia's largest wholesale fruit and vegetable market acknowledges the integral role that Greengrocers play in ensuring that local communities are supplied with a wide range of quality produce year round.

In 2002 Sydney Markets Limited and the NSW Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries launched their Greengrocer of the Year program to recognise businesses who consistently offer their customers exceptionally high levels of quality produce, outstanding customer service, impressive store presentation and product knowledge as well as a unique shopping experience.

Sydney Markets announced the winners of its highly coveted Greengrocer of the Year awards in both the metropolitan and regional categories before 600 members of the fruit and vegetable industry who attended a gala evening held at Star City on Saturday 2nd December.

Norton St Grocer, Bondi Junction was named the 2006 Metropolitan Greengrocer of the Year and Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch of Shellharbour took out the 2006 Regional Greengrocer of the Year award.

Brad Latham CEO, Sydney Markets said "Both Norton St Grocer and Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch are deserving recipients of these awards. They have been unrelenting in their quest for excellence and have proved that hard work and dedication pays off.

I would like to acknowledge not only this year's finalists but all Greengrocers who participated in the 2006 program. This is the 5th year Sydney Markets has implemented this hugely successful program and it is pleasing to note that businesses are using the feedback our program provides to ensure they meet their customers' expectations."

2006 METROPOLITAIN FINALISTS

Best Fresh Farm Markets, Caringbah
Cronulla Fruit Fair, Cronulla
Eastgardens Fruit Centre, Eastgardens
Freshco, Hornsby
Martelli's Fruit Market, Cherrybrook
Minchinbury Fruit Market, Minchinbury
Norton St Grocer, Bondi Junction
Norton St Grocer, Liechhardt
Simply Fresh Fruit Market, Civic - ACT
Simply Fresh Fruit Market, Wooden - ACT

2006 REGIONAL FINALISTS

Frooty Fresh For Life, Gosford
Highlands Fresh, Mittagong
Mountain Fresh Growers, Winmalee
Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch, Shellharbour
Quick Serve Fruit & Veg, Bateau Bay
TJ's Country Fresh Kincumber

NORTON ST GROCER - Awarded 2006 Metropolitan Greengrocer of the Year

Shop 1027, Level One, Westfield Bondi Junction.

Contact: Claudio Guerrero

Store tel: 02 9386-5800

Mobile: 0418 869 517

Hard work, dedication and long hours have certainly paid off for Claudio and Albert Guerrero and their partners George Angelidis and Max Tomassian, with their fruit and vegetable business, Norton St Grocer winning the Sydney Markets Metropolitan Greengrocer of the Year award for 2006.

If you love to cook, enjoy eating quality produce and have an interest in gourmet food then a visit to Norton St Grocer, Bondi Junction is a must.

Now in its second year of trade, this store showcases the season's best fruit and vegetables and is a truly inspirational place to shop. This time of year you will find fragrant peaches, nectarines, mangoes and lychees, at least six different types of potatoes, a wide choice of leafy Asian greens, a dozen different varieties of tomatoes and the berry section includes succulent blueberries, red currants, boysenberries, raspberries and blackberries.

The wide aisles at Norton St Grocer enable customers with their free moving trolleys to move about the store comfortably. The store places a strong emphasis on cleanliness, is well lit and has fantastic eye appeal and their computerised checkout system ensures customers are not kept waiting.

Staff are well trained, have a high level of product knowledge and their friendly and professional approach to customer service and attention to detail makes this store a real winner.

MR SPUDLEY'S VEGIE PATCH - Awarded Regional Greengrocer of the Year

Shop 16, Shellharbour Square, Lake Entrance Rd, SHELLHARBOUR CITY CENTRE, 2529,

Contact: Lou Frino

Store: 02 42956666

Mobile: 0402 394 639

Servicing the Illawarra community with outstanding levels of quality fruit, vegetables and good old-fashioned service, has been worth the effort for *Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch*.

Two years after winning the 2003 Greengrocer of the Year award, Lou Frino the owner of Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch took to the stage to accept the 2006 Regional Greengrocer of the Year award.

"I can't believe that we have won this award again" says Lou Frino. "We have had an interesting and busy year; having just completed a store refurbishment so I am over the moon to receive this accolade. I am also delighted for my parents Angelo and Carina who work alongside me."

Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch located in the Shellharbour Shopping Centre has never looked better. Their recently completed renovation has given the store a vibrant new look, the produce displays are both neat and creative and highlight the diverse abundance of produce available grown throughout Australia.

You won't hear Lou Frino complain, even though he works a whopping 80 hours a week. He is out of bed at 4am, travels to the Sydney Markets, Flemington, and walks several kilometres around the trading area tasting produce and haggling over prices, before travelling back to Shellharbour to unload the truck, stack shelves, complete the paperwork, chat with customers and keep a watchful eye on his store's presentation.

Customers of Mr Spudley's Vegie Patch can be assured that this south coast store is offering them high quality, a wide choice and value for money. You will still find fresh peas for sale here but this greengrocer will offer you shelled peas ready to go, as he knows that his customers are time-poor and always looking for time saving ways to still serve healthy meals.