

Australian olive industry update

After a number of turbulent years thanks to low prices and sub-economic production, the Australian olive industry is well on its way to bouncing back.

2017 has brought a number of accolades for Australian producers, with more than 40 gold medals awarded to local extra virgin olive oils at the recent international Olive Awards held in Adelaide.

Despite the fact there are only 900 growers in Australia, reduced olive oil production in Europe has increased local demand, which is encouraging to the industry.

In 2016/2017, Australia grew 120,000 tonnes of fresh olives worth \$240 million. 95 per cent of the production was used to extract 20,000 litres of olive oil, with the remaining 5 per cent allocated to table olive production.

However, consumer awareness regarding the benefits of olive oil needs to be increased to ensure the continued success of Australian producers.

Alarmingly, half of the imported extra virgin olive oil found on supermarket shelves is not considered fresh enough to be labelled as extra virgin.

At a recent media lunch hosted by Greg Seymour, CEO of Australian Olive Association, a number of producers stressed the importance of education and dispelling myths, including the commonly heard 'you can't deep fry with olive oil'.

Nutritionist Dr Joanna McMillan was also present at the event, and encouraged attendees to research the proven health benefits of extra virgin olive oil. "Extra virgin olive oil is the stand out of all oils when it comes to effects on health and weight control," she says. "There is a large body of evidence behind it, we produce some of the best oils in the world here in Australia and perhaps just as importantly it tastes fabulous adding flavour to your meals."

In line with this push, the Association continues to promote their Everyday campaign, which aims to help customers understand more about Australian extra virgin olive oils.

Source : <https://www.hospitalitymagazine.com.au/australian-olive-industry-update/>