# Three generations of winning cheesemakers

Come this September, Floridia Cheese in Thomastown may have to make room in the cabinet for another big trophy to accompany those the company has already been showered with over the years.

General manager Rosealba Portella says she and the team will find out when they attend the Dairy Industry Association of Australia (DIAA) gala which was postponed due to covid until September.

"We were so excited to win six gold and 12 silver medals at the recently announced 2021 DIAA product awards but we'll have to wait until the big night to find out if we get the champion's trophy," Rosealba (nee Montalto) says.

Floridia Cheese is no stranger to winning kudos. The company was inducted into the Family Business Australia's Victorian/Tasmania Hall of Fame in 2020, in recognition of its contribution to the success of Australia's economy, community and culture.

And at 2020's Northern Business Achievement awards they won three categories: Business of the Year; Export; and Student Placement Employer of the Year.

The family-run business has been in the cheese-making game for going on 68 years, starting when Mauro Montalto arrived from Italy in 1952 and set about making cheese the traditional way to supply friends.

Handed down through his family, Mauro's cheese making skills led to opening a continental deli, the forerunner to Floridia Cheese – today a highly respected outfit that produces about 2500 tonnes of cheeses a year. Up to 100 staff are on board each day, mostly locals.

Floridia's products include the filata range. Originally from Southern Italy, it comes in many shapes and sizes, such as mozzarella, provoletta, salamini, scamorza and bocconcini.

The Montalto and Portella family members receive one of Floridia's numerous awards. (Supplied)

The fresh cheese range includes the award-winning ricotta and haloumi, and for hard cheese, think pecorino, parmesan and Romano. Their semi-matured cheese Casalingo is also another award-winner.

The limited production specialty cheeses such as Burrata and buffalo mozzarella are produced by hand using more artisanal traditions.

Products can be purchased directly from Floridia's factory shop or by ordering from the online store. Deliveries are free within five kilometres, and just $5 within 20.

**OF NOTE:** Expansion is in the pipeline.

**Floridia Cheese, 327 Settlement Road, Thomastown. Opens 8am-4pm Monday-Thursday; 8am-3.45pm Friday; and 8am-1pm Sunday. Inquiries: 9464 2600 or www.floridiacheese.com.au**

AUSTRALIAN DAIRY PRODUCT COMPETITION 2021 DIAA GOLD

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FLORIDIA CHEESE PTY LTD
327 Settlement Road
Thomastown VIC 3074

Phone: 03 9464 2600
www.floridiacheese.com.au

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