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Berry venture proves fruitful for entrepreneurial fruit winery

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Berries are in the blood at Sunny Ridge Strawberry Farm in rural Victoria – but the success of the latest venture on the farm is proving even more fruitful than they could have predicted.

Matt Gallace has worked his grandfather’s land at Mornington Peninsula since primary school days; and so it came as no surprise he choose to follow in his footsteps – the third generation to do so.

Taking traditional winemaking and agriculture skills his Italian grandfather handed down through generations, Matt, along with wife Ruth and senior winemaker/brewer Wayne Hewett, decided to use an innovative blending approach to try their hand at fruit wine, launching **Rebello Wines**.

The wine was an immediate success, taking out a string of accolades, including its **Strawbellini being the only Australian sparkling to be awarded a double gold medal at the San Francisco International Wine Competition** along with international brands France’s Veuve and Sonma Coast’s Piper.

Matt says it was ‘a natural evolution of the business to then try their hand at cider’.

But in true Gallace style, it wasn’t to be just any cider.

Under the Rebello umbrella, ‘Cheeky Rascal Cider’ was born - Australia’s first 100% pure fruit cider blend - revolutionising cider in this country.

‘We decided to use the fresh local berries at the farm, combined with apples and pears from other parts of Victoria, and without using concentrate, flavourings, colours or additives just make a real premium quality Aussie fruit blended cider which everyone can enjoy.’

They hadn’t even bottled their first batch before they’d sold out.

Demand for the product meant a trial run of 1,000 litres just 12 months ago turned into the pair purchasing enough tanks to produce rolling 45,000 litre batches - an 880% growth to date.

The ‘Cheeky Rascal Cider’ range has just added another member to its family - Summerberry – bringing to seven the varieties on offer.

With its own string of accolades already, including the Food Challenge Award for Alcoholic Beverages (which recognises and rewards best practice and innovation in food and beverage nationally), Best Cider (People’s Choice) at the Fed Square Microbreweries Showcase, IGA Perth Royal Show Best Commercial Cider, and medals at both the Australian Fruit Wine Show in Hobart and the Australian Fruit Wine Show in Cairns – the entire range is now available in premium liquor outlets in every State in Australia.

Ruth says the philosophy is simple.

‘Our mantra is to create great products using fresh, local fruit with no nasties, and move with the consumer.’

So what’s next for this innovative family of strawberry revolutionists?

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Matt and Ruth Gallace from Rebello Wines



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'We're continually evolving,' says Ruth. 'We want to keep providing the Australian consumer with something unique using the great quality berries we have on our door step - we have a lot of ideas and seeing these come to fruition is extremely exciting .. so keep watching this space!'

About Rebello Wines

Rebello Wines was launched seven years ago by Matt and Ruth Gallace as a new generation of winemaking, specialising in premium strawberry wines, liqueurs and innovative blends.

Utilising the fresh, local fruit grown from the land his grandfather purchased more than three decades ago - Sunny Ridge Strawberry Farm on the Mornington Peninsula - Matt Gallace, and wife Ruth, use traditional Italian agriculture and wine-making techniques handed down over generations to produce an innovative quality fruit wine.

They like to call it a 'strawberry rebellion'.

Rebello is now a renowned winery in its own right, leading the way in creating quality fruit blends to meet an increasingly discerning consumer palate, with a string of accolades, including Strawbellini an innovative blend of strawberry wine with moscato which was the only Australian sparkling to be awarded a double gold medal at the San Francisco International Wine Competition along with international brands France's Veuve and Sonoma Coast's Piper.

As its reputation builds, so does its products – and the latest member of the Rebello family are its 100% pure fruit blended ciders - 'Cheeky Rascal Cider'.

The range boasts seven cider varietals using fresh strawberries, raspberries and blueberries from the Mornington Peninsula and seasonal apples and pears from Victoria – with no concentrates, flavours, colours or additives.

Despite its infancy, the product range, which has revolutionised cider in this country, already has a string of awards and is available in every State in Australia.

Regions

- Mornington Peninsula (VIC)

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