



Lifelong passion leads to best in show

By Judy Richards-Norris

WHEN Kris Lloyd bought a cheese factory in Woodside in 1994, she had no knowledge about the craft.

But with patience, perseverance and passion she has become one of Australia's foremost makers of goat and cow's milk cheeses, producing more than 50 tonnes of fresh high quality white mould and matured products each year.

Her handmade specialty cheeses under the Woodside Cheese Wrights banner have won numerous Australian and world class awards including Australia's Grand Dairy Award, SA Premier's Food Award and gold and silver medals at the renowned international World Cheese Awards (WCA).

At the 2012 WCA in Ireland she was awarded gold for her Wakame Blue cheese, noted as one of the best 55 cheeses in the world, and became the only South Australian and one of few Australian cheesewrights to be awarded a gold medal in the prestigious event.

Mrs Lloyd was also the national winner of the Telstra Business Woman – Innovation Award in 2010, gold medal recipient of the 2009 Vogue Entertaining and Travel Produce Awards and finalist in the 2012 Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award.

Her passion for food began as a child when she learnt about healthy foods from her grandmother Chrisanthi, who brought to Australia the traditions and recipes from her home on a tiny Greek island.

"She had a huge organic garden at Parkside and I helped her pick the vegetables and turn them into delicious meals for our family," she said.

"My grandmother had a great respect for food and helped me understand the benefits of seasonal food.

"She educated me in what to grow and to eat fruit and vegetables that were in



season. It gave me a lifelong love of good foods and I can boast that I have never eaten anything from the big name fast food outlets.

"I believe that people world-wide are becoming more aware and are questioning where their foods come from.

"I think there is a growing interest in the benefits of using local and seasonal produce."

After completing her education at Unley High School, Mrs Lloyd worked in administration and marketing before compiling business and food safety plans for large companies.

After her marriage to Paul Lloyd, her skills enabled her to support her husband's family business at Coriole Vineyards in McLaren Vale by marketing and developing the company.

"I worked alongside my brother-in-law Mark and we saw a future in the inclusion of foods with the wine," she said.

"We produced olives and other food merchandise and decided that cheese would greatly complement our product range.

Best decision

"The cheese factory came up for sale in Woodside and we took the chance and bought it – with no experience but a lot of enthusiasm.

"It was the best decision we could have made."

Mrs Lloyd took over the role as Woodside Cheese Wrights manager and head cheesemaker and began learning the skills of the trade from the original staff.

"I threw myself into it and began to experiment and learn a complete understanding of the process of cheesemaking with an ambition to



produce a consistent quality product with plenty of flavor and individual character," she said.

"I went to Europe to study some of the great cheesemaking traditions and my lifelong passion began.

"I never tire of the challenges of creating or improving a cheese and have recently begun experimenting with a quality butter to add to our product list."

Mrs Lloyd said she was always compelled to improve and never tired of meeting the challenges of inconsistencies in the products.

"We have always used purely natural ingredients from small local dairies that gave us excellent control over the milk quality, but found that the environment and weather altered the final result," she said.

"So with trial and error and a logical approach we adapted our cheese-making techniques by studying the seasonal differences in the milk, such as fat and protein content.

"This resulted in the production of a

range of seasonal cheeses that have proved very popular.

"Our enthusiastic staff at the factory were encouraged to share ideas and have come up with some great results.

"Each of our successes is a milestone and we are very pleased to have discovered the techniques to create a consistently great cheese every time.

"It's a real team effort."

The busy mother of two sons, Mitchell and Alexander, is also a keen cook, gardener, artist and overseas traveller – and keeps fit by running each day.

She is a collector of the work of new artists, a mentor for emerging young cheesemakers and supporter of local community, sporting and school organisations in Adelaide and around the Hills.

"My life is one big highlight," she said.

"I don't worry about anything I cannot change and believe that if you want something badly enough, just go ahead and do it."

