



AUSTRALIAN SUPERFINE WOOL GROWERS' ASSOCIATION INC

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ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA WOOL AWARDS

The prize for the world's finest wool has been won by producers from the New England region of Australia with a fleece measuring 11.1 microns.

The Golden Fleece entry for the **2006 Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum (Golden Fleece) International Trophy** from Legend/Tarrangower has earned Barry & Helen Finch and The Tully Group the fleece's "weight in gold" and a sculpture designed by famous Swiss artist Not Vital.

At the **27th Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards** held in Australia, Count Paolo Zegna di Monterubello presented the awards at Park Hyatt Melbourne in the presence of the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser and Mrs Jan de Kretser.

The Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy is awarded to a 'golden fleece' measuring less than 13.9 microns with unique qualities of softness and fineness. Like the high quality menswear produced by the Zegna Group for discerning clients worldwide, this noble fibre is highly sort after for its superior characteristics.

At the 2006 ceremony "Legend" was also awarded the **2005 Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy** for a fleece measuring 11.5 microns.

This was the third major win for Barry & Helen Finch since they established their ultrafine wool growing enterprise in 1995 in the Glen Innes district. In 2002 their winning entry measured 11.7 microns and each year since they have broken their own record.

The Tully Group from "Tarrangower", Armidale, who shared the 2006 prize, is also highly regarded throughout Australia for consistently producing some of the finest Merino fleeces. Their 1pp wools have achieved many records.

The **Ermenegildo Zegna Unprotected Wool Trophy**, another keenly contested prize in the Awards, was won by veteran wool producers Jill & Ed Hundy, "Windradeen" Pyramul, NSW with a fleece attracting 96.4 points out of a possible 100.

Situated on the central tablelands of NSW, "Windradeen" was established in the 1930's. The name is synonymous with superior quality fine Merino wool and their wools have won many prizes in the Zegna Awards and elsewhere.

The **Ermenegildo Zegna Protected Trophy** winners were Geoff & Robyn Rayner, "Pomanara", Sallys Flat. Carrying on the Rayner tradition of dedication to the refinement of their flock, the entry attracted 96.8 points out of a possible 100.

This was a first Zegna Award for "Pomanara", a property which runs some 4,000 fine wool Merinos from Merryville/Hillcreston bloodlines averaging 17.7 microns.

South Africa won the Ermenegildo Zegna VA International Challenge, a category open to wool producers from Argentina, New Zealand and **South Africa**. Mr Rodney Austin, "Hatfield" Eastern Cape, entered a fleece measuring 15.4 microns.

All fleeces entered in the competition will be purchased by the Zegna Group and commence their long journey along the road towards the creation of the world's finest quality menswear and accessories produced under the Ermenegildo Zegna brand.

Presenting the trophies Count Zegna said, "I am delighted that growers continue to support these Awards so keenly. I am happy to bring to you the Zegna tradition of searching for excellence and I would like to thank the growers who participate every year in this big challenge to invest in the quality of their production.

"Zegna's enthusiasm for fine wool has never wavered since we first launched the competition nationally in 1980 and even before that when we held the first Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Trophy in Tasmania in 1963.

"Through these Awards and through our programmes world-wide Zegna promotes the virtues, not only of this Golden Fleece, but of the entire production of the superfine wool industry, encouraging the world's most discerning consumers to look for the fabric labels bearing the words "Ermenegildo Zegna – Superfine Australian wool.

"Our exclusive Limited Edition fabric range "Vellus Aureum Trophy Selection" together with all the fabrics Ermenegildo Zegna makes in its selection of the most beautiful natural fibres to create the finest quality menswear from the world's finest Merino wool.

"Although Australian wool growers have faced some very difficult years we can give an assurance that Ermenegildo Zegna will continue to promote their beautiful fibres around the world through the creation of fine new product to stimulate the most demanding final consumers world wide. This represents the most significant action to guarantee a solid future for them and superfine wools", he concluded.

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA AWARDS

2006 RESULTS

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY 2006

Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa

Unprotected and protected sheep Fleece 13.9 micron and finer

PLACE	NAME	POINTS	MICRON
New Zealand	Barrie & Yvonne Payne "Visulea" SOUTH CANTERBURY	81.3	12.1 Micron
Australia	Legend/Tully Group "Legend"/"Tarrangower" GLEN INNES/ARMIDALE NSW	86.1	11.1 Micron

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM INTERNATIONAL TROPHY 2006

WINNERS

Legend/Tully Group
"Legend"/"Tarrangower"
GLEN INNES/ARMIDALE NSW
11.1 Microns

**ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA 2006
UNPROTECTED WOOL TROPHY
AUSTRALIA**

(Fleece 17.4 to 14.0 micron from non-rugged sheep)

PLACE	POINTS	NAME
First	96.4	Ed & Jill Hundy "Windradeen" PYRAMUL NSW 2850
Second	95.6	Daryl & Irene Croake "Oak Hills" PYRAMUL NSW 2850
Third	94.8	TB & PJ Carlon "Queenlee" URALLA NSW 2358
Fourth	94.7	Mark and Lesleann Waters "Riverton" ARMIDALE NSW 2350
Fifth	94.4	R & MC Schnitzerling "Kirrarin" WARWICK QLD 4370
Sixth	94.3	Tony & Winsome Price "Boiga View" PYRAMUL NSW 2850
Seventh	94.1	MI & A Price "Killarney" SALLYS FLAT NSW 2850
Eighth	94.0	JM McEwan "Trefusis" ROSS TAS 7209
Ninth	93.9	David & Susan Rowbottom "Rowensville" ST HELENS VIC 3285
Tenth	93.8	MA & EI Mibus "Glenara" DUNKELD VIC 3294

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA PROTECTED WOOL TROPHY 2006 - AUSTRALIA

(Fleece from rugged sheep)

PLACE	POINTS	NAME
First	96.8	Geoff & Robyn Rayner "Pomanara" SALLYS FLAT NSW 2850
Second	96.2	Tully Group "Tarrangower" ARMIDALE NSW 2350
Third	96.1	Ed & Jill Hundy "Windradeen" PYRAMUL NSW 2850

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VA CHALLENGE 2006 Argentina, New Zealand, South Africa

(Fleece from 14 to 17.9 microns)

PLACE	POINTS	NAME	MICRONS
ARGENTINA Winner	85.40	Enrique & Enrizue Juan Saint Antonin Canessa Hnas "Rayhuao" Pil Caniyeu RIO NEGRO	16.9
NEW ZEALAND Winner	85.70	Lindsay & Margaret Dempster "Hummock" OTAGO	17.5
SOUTH AFRICA Winner	87.83	Rodney Austin "Hatfield" EASTERN CAPE	15.4

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VA INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE 2006

WINNER

Rodney Austin
"Hatfield"
EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

15.4 Microns

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA AWARDS

HISTORY

In 2006 the fine wool industry celebrates the 27th anniversary of the **Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards**.

Since the young Italian entrepreneur **Ermenegildo Zegna** founded his wool mill in 1910 his company has been an enthusiastic promoter of the finest quality raw materials.

His strategy was focused on the selection of the best raw materials from their markets of origin, innovation in product and in the production process and promotion of the brand. He visited Australia in the 1920's in search of the finest Merino wool and a long tradition and historical connection with Australia resulted.

Now the **Ermenegildo Zegna Group** is world renowned for its leadership in men's clothing and fine fabrics produced under the label Ermenegildo Zegna and Zegna Sport, and Agnona in women's wear, and is one of the world's largest users of superfine Merino wool.

Other exotic natural fibres used by Zegna are cashmere from Inner Mongolia, mohair from South Africa and through Agnona, Zegna is one of only three companies in the world allowed by the Peruvian Government to produce and distribute the rare and precious fibre vicuna.

The first **Ermenegildo Zegna Perpetual Trophy**, a regional competition, commenced in 1963 in Tasmania (Australia) for "Superfine Skirted Merino Fleece".

In 1980 the first national Ermenegildo Zegna Award, the **Ermenegildo Zegna Trophy for Extrafine Wool Production (renamed Ermenegildo Zegna Unprotected Wool Trophy)** was launched in conjunction with the Australian Superfine Wool Growers' Association (ASWGA), for wool 17.9 micron and finer, to salute the outstanding effort shown by woolgrowers dedicated to the continued improvement of their product.

In 1998, an **Ermenegildo Zegna Protected Wool Trophy** was added, for fleeces from sheep coated to protect the fleece from the elements, dust and vegetable matter.

In 2002, celebrating the incredible advancements made by Australian woolgrowers, the first **Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum Trophy** (transl. Golden Fleece) was launched for wool 13.9 micron and finer. This award recognized that dedicated group of Australian woolgrowers whose continuing quest for excellence produces a wool of such beauty, softness and fineness to equal other exotic fibres cashmere and vicuna.

In 2003, the next logical step - a global award - the **Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy**, was launched simultaneously in the world's four major fine wool producing countries Australia, Argentina, New Zealand and South Africa. Competing for the title of producer of the world's finest and best Golden Fleece the winner receiving gold in equivalent weight to the winning fleece and a replica of the famous Not Vital "Vellus Aureum" sculpture.

In addition, an **Ermenegildo Zegna V.A.Challenge** competition, for wool 17.9 to 14 micron, was established in Argentina, New Zealand and South Africa, inviting producers to enter fleeces in a competition similar to the very successful Australian awards.

Winners from each country entering the Vellus Aureum International Trophy and V.A.Challenge competitions receive travel and accommodation to attend the Ermenegildo Zegna Awards Gala Presentation held in Australia each year.

In Australia independent judges using ASWGA criteria judge fleeces from all superfine areas. Entry numbers have grown significantly since the national Zegna Trophy competition was established. In Australia in 2006 - 254 fleeces were judged in three categories; in Argentina 258; in New Zealand 52 and South Africa 64.

In the 27 years since the national Ermenegildo Zegna trophy commenced in Australia, strong bonds have developed between the Zegna family and Australian woolgrowers working closely to improve this exotic fibre, to their mutual benefit.

In the other three countries that have more recently joined the competition, the enthusiasm to have their wool judged in such an important event is already apparent.

A perfect example of successful niche marketing has resulted.

THE TROPHIES

Fine works of art have been a very important feature of the Ermenegildo Zegna Awards and artists of international acclaim have been commissioned to create works for each new trophy. Australian art galleries and museums have been the beneficiaries.

In 2002 famous Swiss sculptor, **Not Vital**, was commissioned to create a work for the Vellus Aureum Trophy and his magnificent bronze sculpture "Vellus Aureum" resulted, a replica has become part of the annual prize. The original work was donated by Zegna to the **Powerhouse Museum in Sydney**.

In 1979, world acclaimed English artist, the late **Graham Sutherland**, was commissioned to produce the "Ram's Head" gouache, from which lithographs were produced to form subsequent prizes for the Ermenegildo Zegna Unprotected Trophy. The gouache, and a ceramic plate also produced from the "Ram's Head" design and presented to the Australian Superfine Wool Growers' Association by Zegna have been donated to the **National Museum of Australia in Canberra**.

In 1963, for the first award, Australian sculptor **Steven Walker**, who had studied in Rome and Florence, was commissioned to create an intricate work in platinum, gold and silver. This is housed in the **Tasmanian Wool Museum at Ross**.
