

## ***HISTORY OF THE ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA AWARDS***

In 2008 the fine wool industry celebrates the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards**. Since the young Italian entrepreneur **Ermenegildo Zegna** founded his wool mill in 1910 in Trivero a small town in the Biella Alps, the 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. Representatives from his company 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 one of the world's largest users of extrafine Merino wool, world renowned for its leadership in clothing and fine fabrics produced under the label Ermenegildo Zegna and Zegna Sport for men, and Agnona for women. Other exotic natural fibres used by Zegna are cashmere from Inner Mongolia, mohair from South Africa and the rare and precious fibre vicuna from Peru.

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

In 1980 the first *national* Ermenegildo Zegna Award, the **Ermenegildo Zegna Trophy for Extrafine Wool Production** (recently 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** (Golden Fleece) was launched for wool 13.9 micron and finer. This award recognized the quest for excellence and benchmarked the finest woollen fleece.

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

In addition, the new **Ermenegildo Zegna V.A. Challenge** competition, for wool 17.9 to 14 micron, was established in Argentina, New Zealand and South Africa, to support and stimulate wool growers to aim towards to improving the fineness and quality of their product, 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 every two years.

In Australia independent adjudicators, using ASWGA criteria, judge fleeces from all superfine areas. Entry numbers have grown significantly since the national Zegna Trophy competition was established, with 215 fleeces judged in Australia for 2008 awards.

In the 45 years since the 1<sup>st</sup> Ermenegildo Zegna trophy commenced in Tasmania, strong bonds have gradually been developed between the Zegna family and all the best woolgrowers in Australia, and all other wool

producing countries worldwide, working closely to improve this natural fibre, to their mutual benefit. Within 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 marketing has resulted, which has consequently contributed to elevate superfine wool as an object of desire for the most sophisticated male and female customers.

## **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**.

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA WOOL AWARDS FOR THE VELLUS AUREUM**

**Sydney, Australia:** The golden prize for the world's best ultra-fine wool has been won by Simon and Priscilla Cameron, wool growers from New Zealand's South Canterbury region with a gorgeously-soft ultra-fine 10.8 micron fleece.

As winners of the **2008 Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy** the Camerons, from Ben Ohau Station, Twizel, win their fleece's weight of 1.47 kilograms in gold, and a replica of a sculpture designed by famous Swiss artist Not Vital.

The **Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy** established in 2003, is awarded to a golden fleece measuring less than 13.9 micron, 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.

In a stellar night for the New Zealand merino wool industry, Robert and Debbie Leslie, "Glentara" Greta Valley in the North Canterbury region, won the **2008 Ermenegildo Zegna V.A International Challenge**. This award is open to fine wool producers from New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina, for wool 17.9 to 14 micron. 2008 is the first time in the award's history that New Zealand wool growers have won both the **Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy** and the **Ermenegildo Zegna V.A. International Challenge**.

At the **29<sup>th</sup> Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards** held in Sydney, Australia, Count Paolo Zegna di Monterubello presented the awards at the Sydney Hilton in the presence of Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales and Sir Nicholas Shehadie AC OBE.

From the 135 fleeces entered in the Australian Unprotected fleece competition, Mark and Lesleann Waters, "Riverton", Armidale, NSW, Australia, were judged the winners of the 2008 **Ermenegildo Zegna Unprotected Wool Trophy**.

The **Ermenegildo Zegna Protected Trophy** (Australia) winners were Ed and Jill Hundy, "Windradeen", Mudgee NSW, Australia. Their fleece was judged the best among 31 entries. A 'Windradeen' fleece won the Ermenegildo Zegna Unprotected Trophy in 2006.

The **2008 Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum Trophy- Australia** was won by The Wool Factory Inc, from Horsham, Victoria. The Wool Factory also won the 2007 **Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy**.

The Wool Factory entered a 10.7 micron fleece which was narrowly beaten on points (87.71 points to 86.89) by the New Zealand fleece that was judged as the **2008 Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum International Trophy** winner, due the fleece's superior weight.

The Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards are run in association with the Australian Superfine Wool Growers' Association. 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, "Since 1963 Ermenegildo Zegna has been encouraging wool growers to aim towards fineness and quality, which is mirrored in our pursuit of product excellence, making this the longest collaboration in the wool world.

"The fineness reached this year by the winning fleece is an outstanding achievement and together with the winning three fleeces of past editions of our Vellus Aureum International Trophy, will be transformed into yarns and cuts of fabric incomparable in fineness, to celebrate the Ermenegildo Zegna Centenary in 2010.

"We, Ermenegildo Zegna, are extremely proud to have contributed and to continue to contribute to keeping the image of superfine wool at the highest level in the international consumers mind, as we do with the other best natural raw fibres of cashmere, silk, vicuna and mohair. These natural fibres are artfully transformed into the world's top luxurious fabrics, clothing and knitwear for men's wear and Agnona women's wear."

The Ermenegildo Zegna Group is the world leader in luxury men's clothing. From its Milan, Italy, headquarters Ermenegildo Zegna creates beautiful natural fabrics and designs for men's suits and sportswear sold through over 525 Ermenegildo Zegna stores around the world.

2007 marked yet another year of luxury growth for the Ermenegildo Zegna Group with a revenue of 843 million Euros, and net profit of 70 million Euros. This growth was driven by an accelerated retail expansion, emerging markets and a strong demand for Su Misura, Couture, Upper Casual and Accessories.

Last year marked an important milestone for the Group, with the introduction of the first Peter Marino designed Global Store on Via Montenapoleone in Milan, and a second global store opening on Fifth Avenue, New York, in January 2008.

Since 1910, Ermenegildo Zegna has searched for the best raw materials to create men's clothing aimed at the top end of the market.

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## **ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA AWARDS - 2008 RESULTS**

### **2008 VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY**

#### **2008 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM INTERNATIONAL TROPHY**

Open to fleeces from Australia and New Zealand (less than 13.9 micron)

10.8 micron 1.47kg 87.71 points

Simon & Priscilla CAMERON, "Ben Ohau Station" South Canterbury, NEW ZEALAND

#### **2008 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY - AUSTRALIA** 10.7 micron 0.73kg 86.89 points

The Wool Factory Inc., Horsham, Victoria, AUSTRALIA

#### **2008 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY - NEW ZEALAND**

10.8 Micron 1.47kg 87.71 points

Simon & Priscilla Cameron, "Ben Ohau Station" South Canterbury, NEW ZEALAND

### **2008 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA V.A. INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE**

Open to fleeces from Argentina, New Zealand and South Africa (17.9 micron to 14 micron)

**Winner:** Robert & Debbie Leslie, "Glentara", North Canterbury, NEW ZEALAND

1<sup>ST</sup> 14.5 micron 96.00 points

Robert & Debbie LESLIE, "Glentara" North Canterbury. South Is. **NEW ZEALAND**

2<sup>ND</sup> 16.6 micron 89.50 points

Bruce & Stuart DEWING, "Highlands", Cathcart. **SOUTH AFRICA**

3<sup>RD</sup> 16.8 micron 86.39 points

Cecilio CRESPO, Establecimiento 12 de Julio, Gobernador Costa, Chubut, **ARGENTINA**

### **AUSTRALIAN PROTECTED AND UNPROTECTED FLEECE AWARDS**

#### **2008 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA PROTECTED WOOL TROPHY**

1<sup>ST</sup> P910 97.8 points Ed and Jill HUNDY, "Windradeen" **MUDGEES N.S.W.**

2<sup>ND</sup> P927 97.0 points TULLY GROUP, "Tarrangower" **ARMIDALE N.S.W.**

3<sup>RD</sup> P907 96.8 points Allan and Carolyn PHILLIPS, "Glen Stuart" **EVANDALE TASMANIA**

#### **2008 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA UNPROTECTED WOOL TROPHY**

1<sup>ST</sup> 509 95.2 points Mark and Lesleann WATERS, "Riverton" **ARMIDALE N.S.W.**

2<sup>ND</sup> 440 94.7 points M.A. and E.I. MIBUS and Sons, "Glenara" **DUNKELD VICTORIA**

3<sup>RD</sup> 414 94.6 points Tony and Janet GALL, "Wilson's Creek" **URALLA N.S.W.**

4<sup>TH</sup> 496 94.4 points Macquarie Hills Partnership, **LONGFORD TASMANIA**

5<sup>TH</sup> 453 94.3 points Tarrangower Merino Stud, "Eastview" **HILLGROVE N.S.W.**

6<sup>TH</sup> 449 94.1 points T.B. and P.J. CARLON, "Queenlee" **URALLA N.S.W.**

7<sup>TH</sup> 487 94.0 points Andrew and Cassandra LEDGER, "The Mullion" **YASS N.S.W.**

8<sup>TH</sup> 491 93.9 points M.A. and E.I. MIBUS and Sons, "Glenara" **DUNKELD VICTORIA**

EQUAL 8<sup>TH</sup> 451 93.9 points Daryl and Irene CROAKE, "Oak Hills" **PYRAMUL N.S.W.**

10<sup>TH</sup> 530 93.8 points Ian and Valerie PRICE, "Glen Maye" **SALLY'S FLAT via MUDGEES N.S.W.**

### **2007 VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY**

*The following awards were judged in 2007 and awards presented at the 2008 awards ceremony.*

#### **2007 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM INTERNATIONAL TROPHY**

10.7 Microns 0.55kg 86.85 points

The Wool Factory Inc. Horsham Victoria, AUSTRALIA

#### **2007 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY - AUSTRALIA**

10.7 micron 0.55kg 86.85 points

The Wool Factory Inc., Horsham, Victoria, AUSTRALIA

#### **2007 ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA VELLUS AUREUM TROPHY - NEW ZEALAND**

11.1 micron 0.79kg 85.97 points

Mr & Mrs Barrie Payne, "Visulea" Timaru, South Canterbury, NEW ZEALAND