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Regional Baker's Kitchen Rules Australia's Best Hot Cross Bun Competition 2011

Independent regional bakery, Tatura Hot Bread in Northern Victoria, has taken first prize in a national competition to find Australia's best hot cross bun.

Tatura Hot Bread proprietors, Glenda and Jeff Alexander, stepped up to the plate to impress the judges with their winning batch of buns and take top prize against a strong field of entrants from all over Australia. Ferguson Plarre Bakehouses was pipped at the post, coming in a mere two points behind to take second place.

Victory was even sweeter for this year's winners having wrested the coveted title from rival state South Australia, to bring the trophy back home to Victoria. For the past two years South Australian bakeries – Orange Spot (Glenelg) and Kytos Bakery (Edwardstown) - have won the competition and this year had their sights on taking the hatrick.

The *EOI Oostra Spices - Australia's Best Host Cross Bun Competition* (held 19-20 February) was a highlight of the annual Easter in the Fruitbowl business and industry event, which brings food producers and bakeries together to showcase their wares and promote the use of regional produce.

Tatura Hot Bread adds this latest accolade to a growing list of awards, including Victorian Bakery of the Year and Bakery Trainer of the Year in 2009, as well a plethora of trophies for their now famous vanilla slices, which aficionados vow are worth driving kilometres for.

"We are absolutely over the moon to have taken top prize – it is literally, the icing on the cake," Jeff said. "It's all down to our staff who went all out to deliver a winning recipe. We were up against some pretty stiff competition, so being acknowledged for making the best hot cross buns in Australia, is a bit like winning the grand final I guess."

Baking Industry Association of Victoria's Chief Executive, Garry Higgins, said it was heartening to see both small and large baking businesses taking part.

"The baking industry is an ever evolving sector which is building its success through training initiatives, entrepreneurship and the delivery of quality products to the market place. Events such as this, give bakers the opportunity to share their knowledge and ideas and have some fun in the process," he said.

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