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# Local News

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## Local cheese judges' choice

Fifth Town produces another Royal champion

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Those inclined to believe Fifth Town Artisan Cheese's strong showing at last year's Royal Agricultural Winter Fair was a case of beginner's luck have reason to think again.

The Cressy cheese maker again competed at the exhibition in Toronto earlier this month and again, it took home the grand prize for a goat's milk variety.

This year's winning entry from among 44 different goat cheeses in 13 categories was Fifth Town's Isabella – described by the dairy as a hard goat cheese with a natural brush rind that has been aged in caves for more than a year. Last year, it was the Cape Vessey cheese that placed first.

This year, Fifth Town again came home from the competition with a handful of other awards across the goat's milk spectrum.

The varieties Lighthall Tomme, Nettles Gone Wild, and Wishing Tree all took first place in their respective categories, as did a joint effort Premium Goat Cheddar, which was a shared honour between Fifth Town and Black River Cheese.

In the surface ripened cheese category, the dairy swept the ribbons as Lighthall Tomme won, but Cape Vessey and Petal Luna captured second and third place respectively.

Rounding out the Fifth Town accolades, the Lavender Bagel Chevre won second-place honours in the fresh cheese category.

Fifth Town's master cheese maker Stephanie Diamant said in a release she believes her dairy has excelled because they try to do things differently.

"For some cheese makers, the goal is to make exactly the same cheese each time – "photocopy cheese," I call it," she said. "What we do here is start with a high-quality blank canvas and paint a new edition in technicolour each time."

Diamant added Fifth Town also benefits from its practice of contracting with local farmers and producers to bring in the highest quality of goat and sheep milk possible and then they age the cheese produced in their unique subterranean concrete caves.

In addition to its successes at the Royal Fair, Fifth Town Artisan Cheese placed well at the American Cheese Society competition in Texas earlier this year and was the most recent winner of the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation in May.

The dairy, owned by Petra Cooper, employs 14 people and buys milk from six local family-owned farms. About 80 per cent of the milk used in its cheeses is goat's milk, with the remainder from sheep.



**SAY 'CHEESE'** Fifth Town Artisan Cheese master cheese maker Stephanie Diamant poses with the grand champion goat cheese, Isabella, from this year's Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. (Submitted photo)