



Cuisine 2010 artisan awards with CAFFE L'AFFARE

J. Friend and Co

New Zealand Artisan Wild Thyme Honey

The single-source, single-varietal, certified organic honeys of J. Friend and Co are a fantastic representation of New Zealand. Beautifully presented jars contain honeys from our native and wild flora, in the case of our runner-up here, the wild thyme that covers the rugged Central Otago landscape.

In a previous tourism-related role, director Jeremy Friend had met many organic beekeepers who were sending 300kg drums of their single-variety honeys straight overseas, leaving us locals the losers. He also noted that the flavour of the different honeys varied according to region, likening this to the significance of terroir on wine. The jars bear the vintage and name of the beekeeper (and you can find out more about them on the website).

So Jeremy and partner, Sharyn Woodnorth, started working with beekeepers throughout the country and began selling the range at his local farmers' market in Christchurch. Now it's available all over New Zealand and exported to Australia. He says he has a lot of fun, though it's "a lot more work than I realised".

But it's a fantastic industry, he says, where he has got a lot of help from dedicated beekeepers.

Thyme is one of the most interesting honeys, says Jeremy. The beekeeper who was harvesting it was sending it all overseas because he didn't think Kiwis would be that keen on it, but now it's one of the company's best sellers.

Thyme honey has been called the gorgonzola of honey, being bold, flavourful and more rounded than many others. And Jeremy encourages the notion of matching honey with cheeses, as is more customary in other countries. Among the range is a boxed collection of honey to match cheeses.

The judges noted the honey is extracted without heat and beautifully blended. One commented that thyme honey can be overwhelming, but in this case the floral nature is kept in check.

And how does Jeremy like his honey? "I'm old-fashioned. I can't beat a piece of grainy toast with thyme honey. And butter."

* nzartisanhoney.co.nz



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and Jeremy Friend

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