



“We knew we had something special, but we had very fierce competition”

Morrisons says its triumph in the hotly contested In-store Bakery Retailer of the Year category at last year's Baking Industry Awards 'means the world' to the business

“WE ARE ABSOLUTELY ecstatic,” declared Morrisons' in-store bakery category manager Andy Clegg (pictured left) when the retailer claimed the title of In-store Bakery Retailer of the Year at the Baking Industry Awards (BIA) last year.

“It's a fitting award for all the hard work of all our store managers, bakers and packers throughout the company,” he said, adding the supermarket would be “shouting about the win from the rooftops”.

And indeed it has - the winner's logo has been displayed in every Morrisons store nationwide, as well as on lorries and in television adverts.

“It was all the more special because we honestly didn't expect the win,” says Andy Clarke, buying manager for in-store bakery at Morrisons, 10 months after the retailer's victory. “We knew we had something really special, but it's a tough category and we had very fierce competition - we were all nervous!”

Morrisons also won the award in 2013, and the retailer was aware it would be difficult to win the category twice.

“But we knew we had upped our game,” adds Clarke.

The win was “the high point of a thoroughly enjoyable evening”, he recalls fondly. “It's so useful to get the chance to talk to colleagues, suppliers, and people across the industry that you wouldn't normally come into contact with.”

Winning a coveted Baking Industry Award gives a business something to shout about, Clarke points out. “Especially for



Andy Clegg (centre) accepts the award from Richard Hazeldine and Matt Dawson

the smaller bakery operations, it's the chance to showcase the things you're really brilliant at, and put them on a massive stage for everyone to see,” he says, adding that winning a BIA puts suppliers on Morrisons' radar.

“From our point of view it's a golden opportunity - these bakers, suppliers and manufacturers are untapped resources of the highest calibre, and other supermarkets are missing a trick if they're not looking at all the finalists, because we certainly do.”

“That's why it's so important to enter,” he adds. “That exposure is money-can't-buy stuff.”

“In the past, supermarkets haven't looked so much at the smaller guys, but now provenance and locality are so highly valued that we would be foolish to overlook anyone. Any small baker that has a quality product really needs to get involved - this could be the making of you, your product, your business. It has certainly made a huge difference to us.”

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“Zeelandia has sponsored the In-store Bakery Retailer of the Year category for the past five years and, each year, the quality of the entrants increases, making the judges' task more difficult than ever,” says Zeelandia national sales manager Richard Hazeldine.

“It was not an easy choice, as all the entrants were very passionate about baking, and this was evident from the people interviewed - from the category directors to the bakers themselves. All the stores visited had high-quality products on display, and the staff were extremely knowledgeable.”

“Morrisons was a very worthy winner and the judges noted, in particular, the excellent finishing of the cakes in the cake shop.”

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 **Zeelandia**