

## BLACK VELVET WINS GOLD

I went for the triple choc brownie. Well, who wouldn't? Someone had said it was too good to be true, and yes, it surely was. But once I entered the shiny bright cafe in Clarence Street I was more interested in the massive coffee roaster at the front. A gimmick? Hmm, I tasted a coffee and my eyes popped open. Someone (and I later found out it was the owners themselves, sisters and self-taught roasters and blenders) knew what they were doing.

The cafe, **Velluto Nero** (meaning, appropriately 'black velvet' in Italian) is just weeks old, yet today it is not the caffeine that has Aileen Young and her sisters Gina and Vicky's hearts pounding.

Forming part of the Sydney Royal Fine Food Show, the tenth annual Sydney Royal Coffee Competition was held on Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 February 2008. In this prestigious event over 200 coffees were judged in six classes. Fifteen highly experienced judges assessed each entry.



In the ten years since the competition was launched only a small number of Gold Medals have been awarded, but this year the *only* gold went to Velluto Nero for their Designer Blend Espresso, which made it the automatic Champion Espresso as well!

That buxom gleaming black machine in the window has proved it has every right to be there, tempting in caffeine-deprived workers and shoppers with the irresistible aroma of freshly roasted coffee beans. Better still once they've recharged with a coffee, at the back of the shop there is a seductive range of different blends and grinds which they may choose from to take home.

Come for the Callebaut Belgian hot chocolates if you must – and those brownies – but do sample Australia's best (and that's official) espresso.

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