(Left to right) Long Paddock production manager Romain Riesi, general manager Gaetan Chapon and quality manager Alex Coutts. Picture: Jason Edwards

How cheese stars reinvented the wheel

Kara Monssen

Ivan Larcher may be Castlemaine's cheese whisperer but, from today, he'll be known as the big cheese.

His company Long Paddock, which he runs with business partner Alison Lansley, has won a prestigious delicious. Harvey Norman Produce Awards for its dairy products.

The regional fromagerie and cheese school will be among six producers, including two from Victoria, to be honoured at a prestigious ceremony in Sydney tonight.

Long Paddock nabbed the From The Dairy trophy, beating hundreds of other entrants.

The French-born cheesemaker debuted the company four years ago after spending the last two decades travelling the globe as a cheese consultant.

With the help of Lansley, the dynamic duo's dairy is now served in some of the top restaurants across Melbourne and Victoria, including the Lake House in Daylesford, Rockpool Bar and Grill and Victoria by Farmer's Daughters.

"We're pretty humbled as a young company to receive the award," general manager Gaetan Chapon said.

"The public recognition and endorsement from chefs is humbling."

Chapon said the ambition was to put Aussie cheese on the map.

"We want to create a strong identity for Australian cheese," he said.

"We are a hybrid between Australian terroir and French skills and knowledge ... it's Australian cheese with a French accent."

Hundreds of Australian farmers, growers and producers were considered for this year's awards, selected by a national judging panel made up of A-class chefs including Jo Barrett, Andrew McConnell and Alla Wolf-Tasker.

The winners were recognised across four major categories – dairy, earth, paddock and sea.

The full list of winners is in the September issue of delicious., which goes on sale today.