



## Sydney florist blooms as 2003 FLORIST OF THE YEAR

**I**t was cheers, and tears of happiness all round when Jodie McGregor Flowers, from the Sydney suburb of Annandale, was announced as Sydney Flower Market 2003 **FLORIST OF THE YEAR** at a special awards function on Saturday, March 6.

More than a hundred florists and growers, as well as Sydney Markets Limited (SML) CEO Mr Geoff Bell, SML Board Member Mr Sal Russo, and Temples General Manager Mr Gary Massie, and came together at the Arena restaurant at Fox Studios to celebrate the win.

In addition to the prestigious 2003 **FLORIST OF THE YEAR** Trophy, Jodie McGregor Flowers won a \$4000 media package, and \$1000 credit with Temples Florist Sundries.

The 28 finalists in the Awards were re-shopped by two professional mystery shoppers, who assessed the businesses against criteria established through industry-wide consultation. While all finalists achieved excellent results, the Annandale florist's ratings in the areas of product quality, customer service, and branding and merchandising gave the shop the winning edge.

Jodie McGregor Flowers is a partnership between husband and wife team Jodie McGregor and Stuart White. They have owned and operated the Annandale shop for five years, but 18 months ago, when their daughter was born, Jodie and Stuart decided to re-balance their lives.

"I took paternity leave from banking," Stuart explains, "so that we could both work half time in the shop and half time as parents, and it's going very well so far. I do the buying and the books, and Jodie looks after the floristry, the shop and staff."

Jodie, who trained at Ultimo TAFE, has worked in floristry for ten years, in the UK and Canada as well as Sydney. On returning to



2003 Florist of the Year Jodie McGregor and partner Stuart White accept the award from VIP guest and MC, the Ab Fab Eddy.

Australia from their travels, the couple decided the time was right to start their own business. Now they employ four full-time florists — Camille Hartley, Amanda Nakalevu, Leanne Stevenson and Fiona Rowan — to whom Stuart says they owe much.

"We try to make sure that working here is a great experience for our staff," Stuart says, "and they respond to that by giving us 110%."

"And we also make sure that buying flowers is an amazing experience for all of our customers. We try to make a note of what they bought last time, and what they are about, and to make them feel special. And we make sure we only sell top quality flowers."

*PTO for more party photos...*

### *Thanks for your support*

I would personally like to thank all the florists who entered the inaugural 2003 **FLORIST OF THE YEAR** Awards, and the many who were able to attend the Awards function, for their fantastic support. We received over 120 entries in 2003, and that number increased substantially for the 2004 Awards, with interest from all parts of NSW as well as the ACT. I appreciate the excellent feedback I have received about the feedback you were sent — which, almost as much as the accolades, seems to have been of value to entrants. Even as you read this edition of the Sydney Flower Market News, our professional mystery shoppers are on the road, continuing their assessments of 2004 entrants, so keep up the good work, and let's raise the standards of business excellence in the floristry industry even higher this year.

*Gail Heathwood, Program Manager*



Three of four Jodie McGregor Flowers staff were there to share the joy, left to right, Leanne Stevenson, Camille Hartley and Amanda Nakalevu.