

## Awards exude confidence



The October Gold Coast Business Excellence Awards winners celebrate.

By Aldwyn Altuney

The October presentation of the 2009 Gold Coast Business Excellence Awards (GCBEA) continued to recognise the growing positive shift in business confidence.

About 60 business representatives and guests including Gold Coast City

Councillor Jan Grew and State Member Margaret May gathered at Bond University as the sixth and final monthly round of 2009 winners were celebrated on October 29.

GCBEA president Ian Cousins said there was a very positive atmosphere at the presentation with sponsors, including Suncorp and Michael Sing Lawyers,

delivering positive feedback on how they were finding business at the moment.

"It was the same message as at the September awards – that business was on the improve," Mr Cousins said.

"There were also quite a few different businesses in different categories we hadn't seen before that had survived the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and had come through."

The October winners were: Avisure (Emerging Business), Willis Bros Marble and Granite (Family Business); Reynolds Soil Technologies (Manufacturing and Construction); Sea Pen (Mayor's Innovation GC Award); Yellow Goat Design (Retail, Wholesale and Distribution); Gold Coast Blaze (Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation); My Back's Physio (Trades, Professions and Services); Beyondedge (Information Technology and Multimedia) and Landmatters (Environmental Management).

Awards secretary Lisa Maddison said 2009 entries were about 30 per cent up on 2008 and 50 percent higher than previous months for October.

[www.goldcoastbusinessawards.com.au](http://www.goldcoastbusinessawards.com.au) ■

## Holster: fashion guns fire

Sunshine Coast-based Holster Fashion is taking giant steps in one of the world's most competitive fashion industries – footwear.

Holster Fashion, launched in 2001 by Ben Nothling, 33, and his wife Natalie Miller, 26, has successfully infiltrating the global shoe business with retail representation in 1500 outlets in 38 countries.

Conventional wisdom says that between the megabrands and the supermodel-spearheaded empires, there's little room for a fledgling business to breakthrough and achieve success, particularly on an international scale.

But the likes of supermodel and shoe entrepreneur, Gisele Bundchen's brand Ipanema and her Brazilian compatriots at Havaianas are on notice as Noosa's Holster Fashion and its distinctive range of jelly sandals are well on their way to global footwear domination.

Thanks to deals with major retailer such as Harvey Nicholls, Selfridges, Fenwicks and Harrods, Queensland's footwear *fashionistas* are now trading

in countries such as Italy, France, Spain and the United States.

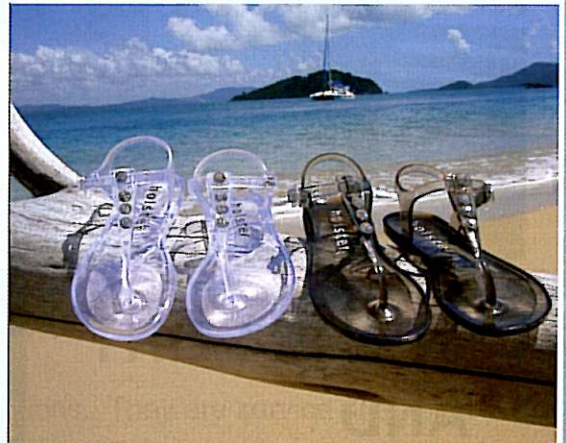
Ben Nothling and Natalie Miller launched Holster Fashion in 2001, with a suitcase full of Balinese shell belts purchased straight from the streets of Bali. This marked the beginning of the Holster Fashion Empire, now centred on the company's jelly sandal which boasts Ms Miller's unique 'bling' diamante embellishments.

"Our point of difference in the shoe market is that we create a unique fashion product which aims to set the trends, not follow them," said Ms Miller.

"I am currently in the midst of negotiating distribution rights in Indonesia, the US, South America (Brazil), Russia and China," Mr Nothling said.

"Securing retail outlets in these markets would truly make Holster a global brand in competition with the likes of Ipanema and Brazilian thong mega-label, Havaianas."

In 2002, Holster sold 150 pairs of fish bone sandals and by 2005, their first shipment of jelly sandals totalled



Holster Fashion is taking on the world.

1200 pairs. In 2009, Mr Nothling is confident that more than 400,000 feet (200,000 plus pairs) will be walking the globe in their signature shoes, which retail in Australia from \$45 to \$77. Next year he hopes to nudge the half a million pair mark.

Mr Nothling, the director of the company, oversees the production and distribution out of Asia, while Ms Miller's creative flair has led her to the role of head designer.

[www.holsterfashion.com.au](http://www.holsterfashion.com.au) ■