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The Just Food Company celebrates its move to larger kitchen by winning 3 Gold and 2 Bronze Medals at the National Irish Food Awards.

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Two years ago the Just Food Company moved out of a small kitchen in Deirdre Hilliard's home, to a commercial kitchen in the Rushbrook Commercial Park in Cobh, Co Cork. This month they extended this new commercial kitchen and celebrated this progress, by winning 3 Gold Medals and two bronze medals at the National Irish Food Awards last weekend. Together with the 5 medals they won at last years awards the Just Food Company range of products now hold a total of 10 "Blas na hEireann" awards.

Deirdre Hilliard of The Just Food Company, says the range has been developed by a team of people who are passionate about great food. "Our Kitchen is staffed by an experienced team and it is their experience and attention to detail which ensure that our products taste the way they do. We believe that food cooked in small batches tastes better and is better. Smaller batches also cook quicker and closer to the time of consumption which has taste, nutritional and food safety benefits, and allows us to respond to natural differences in ingredients. Our ingredients also play a key role in our product taste. The ingredients are all organic, and I believe the end product tastes better because it is organic."

The Just Food Company was established in 2004 by Deirdre Hilliard who operated a stall at the Midleton Farmers Market. "Our customers at Midleton Farmers Market provide us with very valuable direct feedback on the products we produce, allowing us to fine tune recipes and develop new products, a win-win for the customer and for Just Food." In addition to a regular stall each Saturday morning at the Midleton Farmers Market, The Just Food Company now delivers each week to 75 shops across Munster, Galway, Dublin and neighboring counties. For a full list of shops where Just Food products are available please see their website www.justfood.ie. As the availability of Just Food products has grown around the country, they have been able to develop a network of local organic suppliers. Deirdre is quick to point out how important retailers and distributors are in this. "This is only possible with the co-operation of our retailers and distributors, who agree drop off points where we can collect our grower's ingredients, on our way home, having dropping off our own prepared produce."

The star products to date have undoubtedly been the Spicy Lentil Soup and the Cucumber Pickle both of which have proven to be a big hit with shoppers. The Spicy Lentil Soup has won Gold in the Soup category in both 2008 and 2009. It is no mean feat to convince a table full of food critics and chefs that lentils are tasty. The Cucumber Pickle won Gold in 2009 in the very competitive Chutneys, Pickles and Condiments category. In wintertime Soups tend to sell better, with the Salads dominating during the summer. "We are delighted that the range continues to go from strength to strength, and we plan to increase the number of products in the range in the coming year."

In the last two years The Just Food Company has grown to supply 75 supermarkets and shops across Ireland. From small beginnings at the Midleton Farmers market, The Just Food Company currently employs ten people, and has recently expanded their kitchen to accommodate this growing business. The success to date, of this innovative and imaginative team, and its products, augurs well for their prospects in the future.

You can taste some of this award winning products at Midleton Farmers Market on Saturday mornings, and this weekend at Superquinn Lucan (Thursday and Friday) and Superquinn Swords (Saturday and Sunday) as part of the Superquinn Irish Artisan Festival..

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