



Pucker up, time to spit with polish

PRAHRAN Market traders cherished the chance to start the Victorian cherry season with a pip-spitting competition.

Warm weather meant the season, celebrated at the market on Friday, November 20, arrived earlier than usual.

Victorian Cherry Association spokesman Andrew Smith said cherry-lovers could "expect a nice consistent season" with supplies available well into 2010.

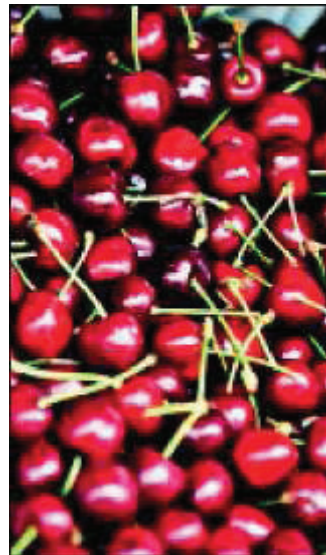
His advice for picking a good cherry was to look for a blush colour fruit and a green stem.

"The stem is the best indicator of shelf life. If the stem is green, it's fresh," Mr Smith said.

Ten traders could nearly taste the title of 2009 Victorian Cherry Pip Spitting Champion after a preliminary spit-off.

Anthony Brancatisano, from Pans of Prahran, said he had the perfect technique.

"You have to have the right mix of wind power, tongue in the right place and teeth in a certain position to get the pip really sailing," Mr Brancatisano said.



But it was Haydar Kahlil, of Kahlil Flowers, who took the trophy with a pip spit of 15.97m – measured at the point the pip stopped rolling.

Thirteen market stands will sell at least eight cherry varieties over summer, including Merchants, Sequoia, and Giant Rubies.

Prices range up to \$20/kg.

KATE BRUCE-ROSSER



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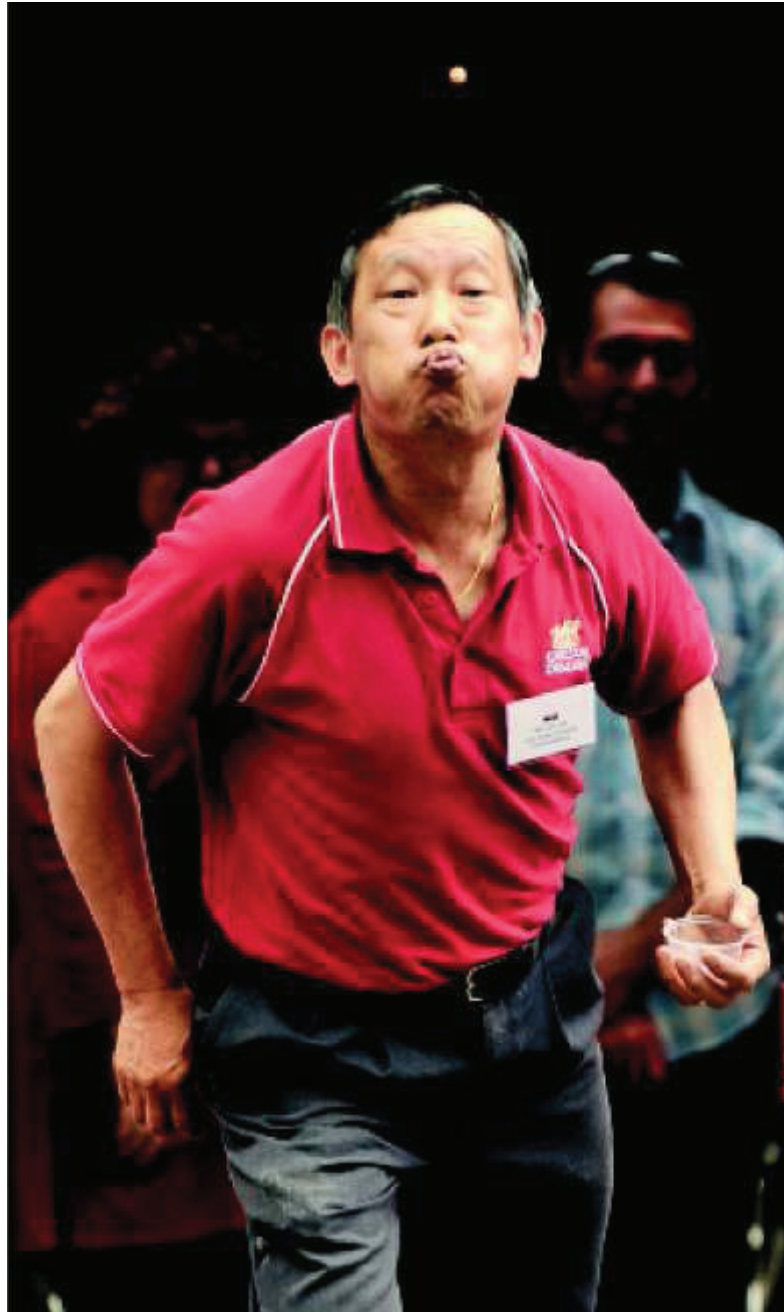
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Kin puts in a keen performance.



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Winner Haydar Kahlil with his 15.17m spit.



Steve gets into the spirit.



Tiffany and Georgia prepare competition cherries.