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Mooroopna Bakery in Victoria's Goulburn Valley crowned king of pie makers in Australia

- Wendy Hargreaves
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Mooroopna Bakery's Bart Honig holds the bakery's famous meat pie that has been crowned Australia's Official Greatest Pie 2012. Picture: David Caird Source: Herald Sun

WHAT makes a perfect meat pie?

For Australia's freshly crowned king of pie makers, the secret is right in the heart of Mooroopna, in Victoria's Goulburn Valley.

"It's all about keeping it local," Mooroopna Bakery's Bart Honig said yesterday after beating thousands of bakers in the Official Great Aussie Pie Competition.

"We get our meat from local farmers in the Goulburn Valley and our flour comes from Bridgewater, over near Bendigo. And then we make everything from scratch," Mr Honig said.

Sixteen judges spent three days judging pies at the Fine Food Australia event at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

The competition has run for 23 years, and drew a record number of entries this year.

Chief judge Mike French said they were testing 20 criteria in the pies, including aroma, golden pastry, a generous filling without a gap at the top, a perfect ratio of meat to pastry, tender meat and perfect seasoning.

He said the stability of the pie - stopping the filling from spilling on shirts - was also a major factor.

"No country in the world does pies like Australia - 13 pies are eaten by every man, woman and child in this country every year," Mr French said. "That's a lot of pies."

Mr Honig reckons his success comes from keeping customers happy. That meant there was little time to celebrate his win.

He set up the bakery eight years ago with his parents, transforming the town's old Commonwealth Bank building.