

11 May 2006

Bic Pens wins best radio ad for 2006

An ad for Bic Pens called "Chicken Inseminator" has won the 2006 Gold Siren Award, for creative excellence in radio advertising, and will be automatically entered into this year's Cannes Radio Lions, it was announced today.

The advertisement, written by John Mescall, Rebecca Newman and Malcolm Chambers from Smart advertising agency in Melbourne, uses comedy to promote the importance of using a failsafe pen. The same ad also won a Silver Siren for winning the overall single category.

Member of the Siren Creative Council, comprising leading creative directors from national advertising agencies, and head of agency, KWP! Advertising, Peter Withy said the winning ad was a very fine, fun idea for a seemingly difficult and low interest category.

"The ad displays very fresh work, well produced and a style of humour we don't hear all that often. The writing makes it unique. Great radio starts with a great script - all the studio tricks in the world won't elevate dullness to greatness," said Peter Withy.

Judge and member of the Siren Creative Council, Ralph van Dijk of Eardrum Australia said: "The Bic campaign was all about doing the basics extremely well. The understated delivery was perfect for the script and it has given Bic a real brand personality to work with. Chuck out your Parkers."

The winner, announced at a breakfast in Sydney, which featured comedian Michael Veitch and Sydney Nova 969's Bianca Dye as host, receives a free trip for two to the International Advertising Festival in Cannes in June and entry into the Radio Lions.

Mr Withy, the Australian judge on the Radio Jury at the inaugural Cannes Radio Lions last year said he expected the ad should do well at Cannes.

Chief executive officer of Commercial Radio Australia, Joan Warner said close to 500 entries had been received for this year's Siren Awards reflecting the growing credibility and importance of the honor.

"The Siren Awards provide a fantastic opportunity for excellent Australian radio creative to be recognized both at home by the advertising and radio industries and again at Cannes, alongside the world's best at one of the most prestigious events held for creatives," Ms Warner said.

Last year's inaugural Gold Siren Award winner was the Victoria Bitter campaign, written by Josh Stephens and Ben Coulson from George Patterson Partners (Melbourne), with creative director, James McGrath.

The other winners at today's presentation included a Silver Siren Award for 2006 campaign category winner, also awarded to the Smart team in Melbourne for its Bic Pens campaign including advertisements entitled "Radioactive, Guinea Pig, Chicken, Isolation Chamber."

A Silver Siren was also awarded to the inaugural Craft Category winner, station Hot 91.1 Sunshine Coast for its ad called "The tadpole and the egg" for IVF Sunshine Coast. Sound engineer for the ad was Vaughan Jones and creative director was Kirsten Scholes.

Judge Peter Withy said the ad was unique. "I think degree of difficulty has a lot of bearing. Imagine being given the task of bring sperm and ovaries to life in situ. Pretty damn difficult."

Ms Warner said the craft category had been introduced into the Siren Awards this year to recognise the crucial role of sound engineers in creating good advertisements for radio.

"The inclusion of the Craft Category into the 2006 Siren Awards recognizes the important role played by sound engineers and hopefully will encourage them to keep pushing boundaries in sound," Ms Warner said.

Today's breakfast was followed by a Masterclass, a creative seminar focusing on Australian comedy entitled, "So Who the Bloody Hell Are We?", and featuring comedian Michael Veitch. He was joined at the seminar by members of The Chaser team, Andrew Hansen and Chas Licciardello, who discussed why their irreverent humour works in Australia and also about confronting and lampooning key players from the world of politics, business, religion, media and culture.

Also speaking at the Masterclass was Senior Lecturer in Cinema Studies at La Trobe University, Dr Felicity Collins. Dr Collins has won a two-year Australian Research Council Discovery Grant looking at how comedy can be understood in terms of nationhood and identity and will talk about radio's role in the formative years

The Masterclass also featured international creative expert and creator of the award-winning Australian radio brand campaign, Ralph van Dijk of Eardrum Australia. In March this year, Van Dijk's agency, Eardrum International, won five awards at the UK 2006 Aerial Awards for radio advertising including the Gold, Silver and Bronze in the Best Directing category.

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Media note: Winning ads can be heard and downloaded on website: www.sirenawards.com.au

List of 2006 Siren Award winners:

Siren Awards 2006 Single Category Winner (Silver Trophy)

Agency: Smart, Melbourne
Writer: John Mescall, Rebecca Newman and Malcolm Chambers
Client: Bic Pens
Commercial Title: "Chicken Inseminator"

Siren Awards 2006 Campaign Category Winner (Silver Trophy)

Agency: Smart, Melbourne
Writer: John Mescall, Rebecca Newman and Malcolm Chambers
Client: Bic Pens
Campaign Title: "Radioactive, Guinea Pig, Chicken, Isolation Chamber"

Siren Awards 2006 Craft Category Winner (Silver Trophy)

Station: Hot 91.1, Sunshine Coast
Sound Engineer: Vaughan Jones
Creative Director: Kirsten Scholes
Client: IVF Sunshine Coast
Campaign Title: "The tadpole and the egg"

Siren Awards 2006 Single Category Winner (Gold Trophy)

Agency: Smart, Melbourne
Writer: John Mescall, Rebecca Newman, Malcolm Chambers
Client: Bic Pens
Commercial Title: "Chicken Inseminator"

About the Siren Awards

What are the Siren Awards? The Siren Awards are a new national advertising award, started in 2005, designed to encourage excellence and creativity in radio advertising.

How do they work? The award recognises excellence in radio creativity – and is announced every two months. The annual winner is chosen from the winners and highly commended in each round and is judged by the Siren Creative Council, a group comprising leading creative directors from national advertising agencies together with radio representatives

Who can enter? People writing radio ads from advertising agencies or radio stations

How do I enter? Entry is free via a dedicated website. www.sirenawards.com.au. Entries are submitted online with relevant information contained on a downloadable entry form found on the website.

When do the 2007 Awards start? Round 1 of the 2007 Siren Awards is underway and entries will close on May 31.

What are the categories? Radio Single, Radio Campaign (consisting of no less than 3 commercials) and the Craft Category.

Who judges the Award? The annual award is judged by the Siren Creative Council. The winner of each round during the year then judges the following round.

What are the prizes? Apart from recognition from winning the bi-monthly award, the ultimate winner for the year has a chance to win a trip for two to Cannes and be entered into the Cannes Lions Radio Award. Other prizes include the Siren trophy as well as inclusion on a CD release of yearly winners to acknowledge achievement.