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A world of difference in each cup

Wagonga coffee owners Tony and Judy Smith are Canberra's only coffee roasters licensed to distribute both Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance coffees.

The Smiths began their coffee business in 2000 and produce what they believe to be Canberra's most extensive range of coffees, including organic, specialty, decaffeinated, and their own blends.

"We roast all the beans ourselves and carefully manage each batch to get the best roast for each type of bean," Tony Smith says. "There is nothing better than fresh coffee."

Most of the world's coffee beans are grown by small-scale farmers in developing countries. In an industry dominated by a few large and powerful international coffee companies, these farmers are forced to put up with low and unstable prices, he says.

During the past decade, coffee bean prices

have fallen to a 30-year low, with as little as 3c from every \$3 cup of coffee reaching the farmers who grew the beans. Fairtrade and the Rainforest Alliance aim to rid the coffee industry of unfair practices.

"It is important to us to be licensed members of Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance. The fee we pay to be certified roasters helps to promote the work of both organisations," Smith says.

The Smiths have received awards for their coffees, including bronze and silver at the 2004, 2005 and 2006 Tasmania Royal Fine Food awards, and a bronze at the 2002 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Their coffees are sold every Saturday at the farmers' markets at Exhibition Park. Prices range from \$8.50 to \$12 for 250g, \$16 to \$17 for 500g, and \$30 to \$32 for 1kg.

■ This article was contributed by the Capital Region Farmers Market.

