

THE CIDER TRAIL

Hard cider producers are an emerging group in the craft beverage industry. Just wander down the road and you'll find quite a few cideries popping up across the Southeast.

by **MARISSA HERMANSON**

ALBEMARLE CIDERWORKS NORTH GARDEN, VIRGINIA

The Shelton family runs Vintage Virginia, an apple tree nursery, and ferments their own hard cider at Albemarle CiderWorks, just south of Charlottesville, Va. The family business started as an orchard in 2000, and their cider business launched in the summer of 2009. They sell five ciders in 750 ml bottles. Two blends, Jupiter's Legacy and Ragged Mountain, and three varieties, Royal Pippin, Old Virginia Winesap and Virginia Hewe's Crab. Bottles are distributed throughout Virginia in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, Richmond, Charlottesville and Staunton. albermarleciderworks.com



MCRTICHEL WINERY AND CIDERWORKS THURMOND, NORTH CAROLINA

After working in the wine industry in California and Oregon, husband and wife Sean and Patricia McRitchie moved to North Carolina to start their own cider operation. They started selling hard cider in 2007, and you can find it bottled and kegged throughout the Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh and Durham areas. They have been sourcing their apples from outside Asheville, but after planting their own orchard twenty miles from the Virginia border, they hope to be crushing apples come 2013. mcritchiewine.com

WINDY HILL ORCHARD AND CIDER MILL YORK, SOUTH CAROLINA

Windy Hill started pressing hard cider back in 1996 when they produced so much sweet cider that they didn't know what to do with it. The orchard and winery also has pick-your-own apples, sweet apple cider, apple pies, apple butter, fresh-made caramel apples and apple donuts, as well as their hard cider in 750 ml bottles. They grow seven varieties, but their mainstays are Stayman's Winesap and Russet Golden, as well as the hugely popular Galas and Pink Ladies. Windy Hill cider is available at the orchard and throughout the Carolinas. windyhillorchard.com or yorkcider.com



OLD HILL CIDER TIMBERVILLE, VIRGINIA

Old Hill Cider's blend of apples is heavily based on Albemarle Pippin, Stayman and Winesaps. Shannon Showalter's orchard, which has been in his family since the mid-60s, is just 30 minutes north of Harrisonburg, Va. The 40-acre orchard produces 26 varieties. Showalter is releasing his hard cider this fall but has been fermenting cider as a hobby for more than 20 years. The farm boasts more than just cider – pick-your-own apples and sweet cider, as well as apple cider donuts. Fun for the whole family. oldhillcider.com

BOLD ROCK HARD CIDER NELLYSFORD, VIRGINIA

After living in New Zealand for the past decade, John Washburn moved back to his property in Nellysford with the wild idea to start a cider company. He came back with a big dream and cider partner Brian Shanks, a New Zealander who is well-versed in cider production and has helped launch cideries around the world. Bold Rock started serving cider back in May and now distributes 350 ml six packs from Galax to Leesburg to Virginia Beach. facebook.com/boldrockhardcider

\$4.78
MILLION CIDER
SALES IN 2011

129
CRAFT CIDER
PRODUCERS
IN THE UNITED
STATES

11
Hard craft cider
producers across
the Southeast and
Mid-Atlantic

GO!

Virginia's inaugural Cider Week kicks off November 12. Weeklong events will include cider dinners, pairings and mixology throughout the state. Visit ciderweekva.com for more info on events.

FOGGY RIDGE CIDER DUGSPUR, VIRGINIA

Twenty-five minutes outside of Floyd, Va., Foggy Ridge has been growing apples specifically for cider production since 1998 and has been selling hard cider since 2006. They grow varieties such as Harrison, Hewe's Crabapple, Roxbury Russets and Ashmead's Kernel. They sell four bottled ciders – their dry Serious Cider, best-selling First Fruit, Sweet Stayman and Foggy Ridge Handmade. They also make two port ciders – Pippin Gold and Pippin Black. Perfect for after-dinner drinks and mixing into cocktails. foggyridgecider.com



POTTER'S CRAFT CIDER FREE UNION, VIRGINIA

Not too far outside of Charlottesville you can find old college buddies Tim Edmund and Dan Potter, of Potter's Craft Cider, bottling their Farmhouse Dry cider in their two-room production facility, an old horse veterinary clinic that they renovated to accommodate their booming cider business. These homebrewers turned their hobby into a viable business venture in fall 2010, and since their cider has been picked up on keg and in bottles by bars, restaurants and groceries throughout Central Virginia. You can find them at Blue Mountain Brewery, South Street Brewery, Citizen Burger Bar, Miller's. The Local restaurant and Charlottesville's Whole Foods. Their second varietal is aging in Laird's Apple Brandy Barrels and will be released this fall. potterscraftcider.com

FOGGY RIDGE CIDER DUGSPUR, VIRGINIA

Twenty-five minutes outside of Floyd, Va., Foggy Ridge has been growing apples specifically for cider production since 1998 and has been selling hard cider since 2006. They grow varieties such as Harrison, Hewe's Crabapple, Roxbury Russets and Ashmead's Kernel. They sell four bottled ciders – their dry Serious Cider, best-selling First Fruit, Sweet Stayman and Foggy Ridge Handmade. They also make two port ciders – Pippin Gold and Pippin Black. Perfect for after-dinner drinks and mixing into cocktails. foggyridgecider.com

Crampton's Gap. The cider company's farm was used as an encampment for Union soldiers during the Civil War battle. Be sure to swing by cider company Sept. 14 to join in the fun. distillerylaneciderworks.com

3

Southeast States made the Top 10 list for cider case sales in 2011

No. 4 Virginia, 91,266 cases

No. 5 North Carolina, 78,530 cases

No. 10 Georgia, 44,293 cases

CASTLE HILL CIDER KESWICK, VIRGINIA

A historic barn used to auction cattle now is the home of Castle Hill's cider fermenting facility, tasting room and events space. Castle Hill started serving cider in their tasting room back in July 2011 and they now have three ciders – one still and four sparkling. The Gravity is the still cider and the petulant ciders are Levity, Terrestrial and Celestial – all sold in 750 ml bottles. In the Charlottesville area, you can find Castle Hill at Feast, Greenwood Market, Beer Run, Market Street Wine Shop, Foods of All Nations and Belmont Butchery. castlehillcider.com

BLUE BEE CIDER RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

After apprenticing under Chuck Shelton, the cidemaker at Albemarle CiderWorks, Courtney Malley decided to open her own urban cider company in Richmond. Slated to start crushing apples this month, Malley then hopes to sell Blue Bee Cider in Spring 2013. Blue Bee is located next to Legend Brewing Company in the Old Manchester District. Malley currently leases orchard land in Nelson County, Va., but will start planting an urban orchard on the cidery premises in late fall 2012. bluebeecider.com

FISHING CREEK CIDER COMPANY WHITAKERS, NORTH CAROLINA

Seven miles east of the small town of Whitakers, N.C., father-and-son duo Michael and Anderson O'Brien will start bottling and selling their hard cider this fall. After experimenting with hard cider for the past few years, the O'Briens are now going whole hog with their hobby. They grow more than 35 varieties on their eight-generation family farm (also purchasing apples from North Carolina and Virginia). They are giving tribute to their forefather with his name, L.L. Draughon, and picture on the cider's label. The first batch released will be a limited supply of 100 cases of 750 ml bottles. fishingcreekcider.com

APPLE WINES NOT A HARD CIDER FAN? TRY THESE WINES AND SEE IF THEY SUIT YOUR PALATE.

2011 Apple Wine, Mountain Cove Vineyards, Lovington, Va. 45% mix of Red and Golden Delicious with 30% Granny Smith, 15% Winesap and 10% Fuji

Mountain Apple Wine, Hill Top Berry Farm & Winery, Nellysford, Va. Semi-dry wine made with a blend of apple varieties. Makes great spiced mulled wine and pairs well with pork.

Mill Hill Apple, Wintergreen Winery, Nellysford, Va. Refreshing and crisp wine made from Virginia apples. Great with pork, barbecue, smoked meats and cheeses.

SWING BY!

Carter Mountain Orchard is open Mid-August through November. They have several pick-your-own varieties and their country store boasts apple butter, jams and jellies, fruit syrups and pancake mixes. Stop by the bakery for fresh, hot apple cider donuts and apple pies. cartermountainorchard.com



Featured in the September 2012 Breathe Magazine

FOGGY RIDGE
CIDER