

GOOD LIVING DRINKS



CIDER

IT'S THE POMME

Historically, the best ciders in Europe have been made in places that were too cold to dependably grow wine grapes—Normandy in France, Asturias in Spain, for example—and that was true in America as well. The Maloney family moved from California to Massachusetts in 1972 and, not seeing any grapes to make their usual homemade wine, began to ferment apples using their vinification skills. In 1984, they started to sell their cider, and today West County Cider is one of the best producers in the country. Like most real cider (the word is often misapplied to unfermented apple juice, but that's just, well, apple juice), West County isn't widely distributed. There are dozens of excellent producers around the country, though, and not just in chilly climes. The Old Time Cider website (oldtimecider.com) has a map featuring about 30 of them. Below are four of our favorites. If you like a drink with seductive aromas, moderate alcohol, good balance, complexity, and ripe fruit flavors, support your local cidemaker. —J.R.

<p>Farnum Hill Ciders Lebanon, NH (farnumhillciders.com)</p>	<p>We like the “extra dry” and the “semi dry” equally. Both have lively bubbles with good acidity and a complexity of flavor that goes way beyond apples. The “semi dry” is still very dry.</p>
<p>Foggy Ridge Cider Dugspur, VA (foggyridgecider.com)</p>	<p>The golden-hued “Serious Cider” has a gorgeous nose and a perfect sweet-tart balance. “Sweet Stayman” is paler and slightly tannic, with nice fruit flavor. Neither is particularly effervescent.</p>
<p>Wandering Aengus Ciderworks Salem, OR (wanderingaengus.com)</p>	<p>The “dry” is very complex and yeasty with a mouthwatering finish (our favorite in the tasting). The “semi dry” is more appley, and the “Heirloom Blend” is the fruitiest of the three.</p>
<p>West County Cider Colrain, MA (westcountycider.com)</p>	<p>A single-variety cider made from Baldwin apples smells floral and a little like piecrust. It's rounder than the “Dry Baldwin.” A Tremlett (now labeled Pippin) I'd cellared for three years was elegant and still fresh.</p>

