

CIDERCRAFT

A TOAST TO NORTH AMERICAN CIDER

19 bottles of Cider ON THE WALL

SPRING / SUMMER 2014
ON SALE UNTIL NOV 2014



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Cultural Colonists

THE MODERN FOUNDING FATHERS OF CIDER

BY JEFFREY BOOK

American history tells us that it is our patriotic duty to drink cider. Unfortunately, the bittersweet truth in our history is that cider has seen the best of times and the worst. The original decline of cider in our young republic began with growing urbanization and the rising popularity of beer at the turn of the 20th century. In “The Botany of Desire,” author Michael Pollan notes that before 1900, 99 percent of all apples were drunk. After the turn of the century, 99 percent were eaten.

Prohibition hit cider especially hard because unlike wine, it had no religious exemption, while beer’s chief ingredient, barley, was easier to grow and transport. “We lost our cider heritage to beer and the Temperance movement,” says cider maker Jim Koan of J.K.’s Scrumpy in Flushing, Mich.

Cider’s comeback began around 1990, led by orchardists who looked to the past to adapt to the pressing reality of globalized, mass-market apple production. These cider pioneers were stubborn individualists who shared a commitment to creating an authentic, high-value product that would generate new demand for an ancient beverage. The cider revival, now confirmed by the entry of big-money players, owes a great deal to these latter-day Johnny Appleseeds. Here, we lift our glass to a few of the founding trailblazers.



DIANE FLYNT

FOGGY RIDGE CIDER

When Diane Flynt left her banking job in Charlotte, N.C., for the farm in the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains she and her husband bought in 1997, she saw cider as a key to the rural life she desired.

"At the time no one was making cider in the South full-time and exclusively, I'd say nowhere south of Massachusetts," she says. "In 1998 we planted our original orchard to test different cider apple varieties, to see what would perform well in our climate." Since sales started in 2005, her **FOGGY RIDGE CIDER**—made from nearly a dozen different English, French and American varieties—has been hailed as nuanced and food-friendly.

"When people ask me how to make good cider, I say study oenology," she says. "We ferment very cold because I believe that maintains the flavors of the fruit. We select yeast strains that will perform well with the acidity and other characteristics of the fruit. We don't use controlled atmosphere storage—we pick the apples when they're ready and ferment them, over about six months."

Flynt aims for minimal manipulation, shunning the shortcuts of what she calls "factory cider" and compares it to the production of soda pop—with cheap fruit, added sugar, alcohol dilution and high volume production with additives to make a consistent product. "Our way costs more but tastes better," she adds.

Making cider Flynt's way means that, as with wine, the cider varies year to year based on the quality and blend of fruit and other factors. She works with growers to get them to increase production of cider apples. Tending her own orchard is especially rewarding, she notes, adding, "the fact that these trees will outlive me is very satisfying."



NEXT GENERATION CIDER

"I really like **BLUE BEE CIDER** in Richmond (Virginia). Courtney Mailey is making good decisions—she understands that beer yeast and blueberries are not what you need to make good cider."