

The Australian Cider Guide

**FROM TREE TO GLASS,
LEARN ALL ABOUT
AUSTRALIA'S NEW WAVE
OF CRAFT CIDER**





Australian cider

PURSUING THE REAL

From ancient soils to surf and sun, in Australia we celebrate the real. And our real craft cider is made with 100% Australian fruit.

Gifted with a unique climate and landscape, Australia stands apart in its diversity and quality of fruit. Our growers and makers are down to earth and adventurous by nature, perfecting old traditions and playing with new ideas to produce craft cider that's deliciously different.

“Unlike cider makers in Europe, here in Australia we have no allegiance to any particular style or expectation. We don't make cider a certain way because ‘that's how it's always been done’. This gives us the ability to highlight the individuality of the maker and the grower – to do whatever we want with our cider.”

Nyall Condon, cider maker

Flying Brick Cider Co.,
Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria





READ THIS GUIDE TO

Discover...

What cider is

Where cider comes from

Why so many orchardists, winemakers and brewers have turned their hand to making Australian craft cider

Where Australia's best apples and pears are grown

Which varieties of apple and pear are used to make Australian craft cider

How Australian craft cider is made

What to look for when tasting the many styles of cider

How to serve Australian cider and what food to enjoy it with

This guide has been written on behalf of Cider Australia by Max Allen, award-winning drinks journalist, author, cider judge and cider maker.





What is cider?

BACK TO BASICS

Cider is an alcoholic drink produced from fermented apple juice. It has been made and drunk for thousands of years wherever apples are grown.

Cider making was well established by the Middle Ages in north-west France, northern Spain and southern England, and these three countries are still the world's largest cider producing and cider consuming nations.

Cider was particularly popular in England in the 18th century, when the British Empire was expanding around the globe. As a result, the culture of apple growing, cider making and cider drinking travelled with English settlers on their journey to the New World, to North America – and to Australia.

Cider really took off in America: by the late 19th century it had become the country's most popular drink. In Australia, by contrast, it has enjoyed brief periods of popularity but has largely taken a back seat to wine, beer and spirits.

Until now.





THE RISE OF CRAFT CIDER

Since the late 2000s, cider has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance, both in traditional cider producing countries and in Australia. A generation ago, you could count on one hand the number of commercial cider makers in this country. Now there are hundreds of them.

The cider market in Australia is dominated by large-volume brands produced on an industrial scale by multinational beer companies. These brands are made from imported apple-juice concentrate, reconstituted with water and sugar. To hardcore cider purists, they shouldn't even be called cider, but should instead be labelled 'cider-like alcopops'.

At the same time, a growing number of smaller producers are intent on crafting a more diverse range of real Australian ciders from 100% locally grown apples and pears. This craft sector makes up a relatively small percentage of the overall market, but is increasing steadily in volume and value, driven by consumers who were initially attracted to the commercial brands but are now seeking higher-quality, more authentic ciders.

"Because craft cider is quite a new thing in Australia, the community of cider makers is still small and intimate and dynamic. Visitors to our cellar door pick up on that: people love the fact that we grow our own apples, and that we make the cider ourselves."

Clare Mackie, co-owner

Daylesford Cider,
Daylesford, Victoria

What's in a name: 'pear cider', or 'perry'?

In England, an alcoholic drink made from fermented pears is traditionally called perry (in France it's called *poiré*) and is historically produced using heirloom varieties of bitter-tasting pear. In Australia, where hardly any true perry pears are grown, the drink is usually called pear cider.





The history OF AUSTRALIAN CIDER

INNOVATION BLOSSOMING
THROUGH ADVERSITY

1700s

William Bligh, captain of the British ship HMS Bounty and future governor of New South Wales, lands on Bruny Island off the coast of Tasmania and plants apple trees. Barrels of cider are regularly carried on board by the British Navy during the 18th century: the drink is given to sailors to help ward off scurvy.

EARLY 1800s

Settlers plant apple trees and start making cider. Some original trees are still growing, including a sapling thought to have been brought to Melbourne by John Batman in the 1830s. Some original convict-built cider mills also still exist, such as Woolmers Estate near Launceston. Furthermore, descendants of original settlers are still producing. The Lyne family in Tasmania still use an English oak cider press imported in 1826.

The discovery of gold leads to a population boom and apple-growing regions are established, including Harcourt and Stanley in Victoria, Bilpin and Batlow in New South Wales, the Huon Valley and Tamar Valley in Tasmania, the Adelaide Hills in South Australia, Stanthorpe in Queensland and the Perth Hills and Donnybrook in Western Australia.



1850s

1850s

Geelong watchmaker Louis Kitz branches out into the wine and liquor business, and starts to make cider, moving his cider factory to Melbourne a few years later. 'Kitz's' becomes one of Australia's best-known 19th century cider brands.

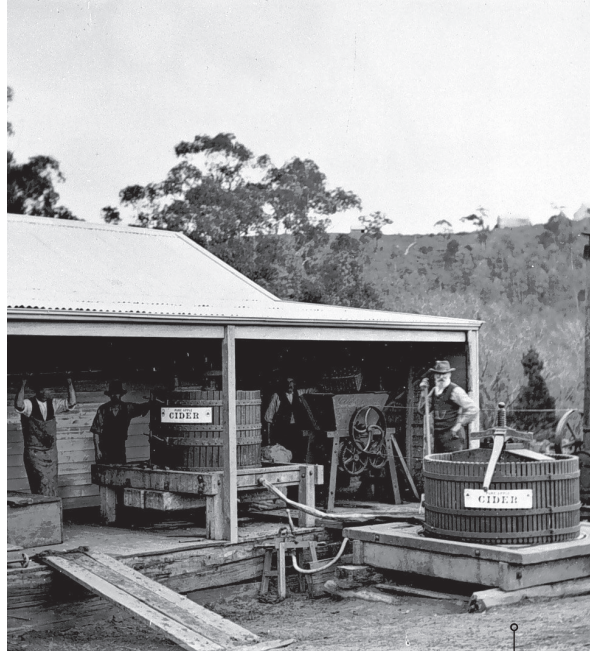
LATE 1800s

The industry expands (particularly in Tasmania, the 'Apple Isle') and many eating and cider apple varieties are imported from Europe. As a result, today Australia boasts a diverse genetic heritage of apples maintained in various collections around the country, providing present-day growers with a wide choice of heirloom varieties.



1882

Leslie Murdoch establishes Tasmania's first commercial cidery, the Tasmanian Cider Company, outside Hobart.



Golden Glen Orchard, Spry family of Wattle Glen

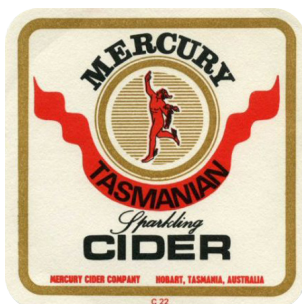
1890s

French winemaker Joseph Hippolyte Foureur, recently arrived in South Australia, starts making 'sparkling cider' from apples grown in the Adelaide Hills, using the methode traditionnelle of secondary fermentation in the bottle.



1905

The Spry family of Wattle Glen, on the outskirts of Melbourne, employ English cider making experts to establish their own cidery: the company's advertising slogan is 'If you've got the blues, drink Spry's Cider'.



The Tasmanian Cider Company registers the name 'Mercury'. Today, it is Australia's oldest surviving commercial cider brand. The following year, Mercury cider begins exporting to Asia.

1912

1930

Australian apple exports to the UK reach their peak. Popular ciders include Elmsdale in the Adelaide Hills, Mountain Maid at Batlow and Mr Mac's Lilydale and Devondale Ciders in Melbourne. Responding to the then-influential temperance movement, some of these ciders are sold as non-alcoholic, 'healthy' beverages with 2% alcohol or less.





1940s & 1950s

Cider's popularity wanes after World War II, with only a handful of producers managing to survive.

Mini cider boom. New brands are established including the Cider Barrel, Kellybrook and Cobbley's Cider. Mac's Cider finds an export market in Singapore. Bulmer's, the UK's largest cider company, sets up a cider making facility to produce its Strongbow brand in Sydney.

LATE 1960s - EARLY 1970s

MID-1970s

Britain joins the European Economic Community. Australian apple exports drop dramatically. The apple-growing industry heads into a period of rationalisation. Many orchards are pulled out. Cider sales begin to steadily decline.

Most cider businesses established in the mid-20th century have closed or been bought by big brewers. Widely-available brands are limited to Mercury and Strongbow. But a handful of small-scale, passionate regional makers keep the flame alive, hoping for a renaissance – this includes the Kelly family in the Yarra Valley, the Henry family in Harcourt, the Thorogoods in Burra and the Mountfords in Western Australia.

1990s & EARLY 2000s

2007

Cider popularity surges in Europe following hot summers and a hugely successful Magnier's marketing campaign to drink cider over ice. This trend coincides with a thriving interest in boutique Australian wineries and craft breweries. Over the next five years, dozens of new brands are born, some by existing wine and beer producers but most by startup cider companies and apple growers looking to diversify.



“Dad was overrun with customers when he started making cider in the 1970s. It was huge back then. Then it fell off a cliff. When I started working at the cellar door as an 18-year-old and offered cider to someone they’d say, ‘Why?’ Now we can’t keep up with demand. It’s been great to see the revival.”

Phil Kelly, second-generation cider maker
Kellybrook Winery and Kelly Brothers Cider,
Yarra Valley, Victoria



In response to the boom, the first Australian Cider Awards are held in the old apple-growing region of Orange, New South Wales. The awards attract more than 100 entries and become a well-supported annual event.

2011

2012

A new national association, Cider Australia, is established to support the development of a sustainable cider category. The association represents the interests of cider makers on national and international issues, encourages professional and technical development, information sharing and benchmarking. It also educates and promotes the industry to consumers.



Cider Australia launches the ‘100% AUSTRALIAN GROWN’ trustmark to help consumers identify which ciders on the market are made from local apples and pears, to support Australian fruit growers and their regional communities and boost jobs in the craft cider community.

2018

TODAY

There have never been so many cider makers in Australia, and there has never been such a diverse array of high-quality ciders available. As growers learn more about which apple and pear varieties are best suited to particular regions, and cider makers continue to learn how to best use that fruit, we will see the quality and diversity of Australian cider continue to grow.





Like our wine regions, Australia's main apple and pear-growing regions are found in the cooler southeast and southwest of the country. Apples grow best in a temperate climate. The trees need a proper winter chill and plenty of rainfall – or access to irrigation water – during the growing season to grow quality fruit. They also need fertile, well-drained soils.

Over the past 200 years, Australian growers have identified various regions that provide the best environment for growing the highest-quality apples and pears. These well-established regions are mostly found relatively close to the ocean (or, in Tasmania's case, surrounded by ocean) or at higher-altitude inland regions such as those found along the Great Dividing Range, where the climate is cooler and the rainfall higher.

In many cases, the orchards in these regions are farmed by fourth or fifth-generation growers, people with many decades of experience in how to best manage the trees and which varieties are suited to which microclimates. The current generation of these families has often led the way in diversifying into craft cider, setting up cideries that have become hubs of their local community.

Australia's craft cider producers are even beginning to identify distinct regional flavour characteristics in the ciders they make, derived from where and how the apples and pears are grown – the soil, the sun, the rainfall and even the culture of the grower.

This is the Australian cider equivalent of what wine people call *terroir*.



MAJOR APPLE-GROWING REGIONS OF AUSTRALIA



Victoria

The biggest producer of apples in Australia. Main regions are:

- 1 Goulburn Valley (also where most of Australia's pears are grown)
- 2 Yarra Valley
- 3 Harcourt
- 4 Mornington Peninsula
- 5 Gippsland

New South Wales

The second-biggest apple-producing state after Victoria. Main regions are:

- 6 Orange
- 7 Bilpin & Sydney Basin
- 8 Batlow

Queensland

Third-largest apple-producing area in Australia, centred on the surprisingly cool, high-altitude southwestern corner of the state. Main region is:

- 9 Stanthorpe

Tasmania

Oldest apple-growing state in Australia, long-known as the 'Apple Isle'. Main regions are:

- 10 Huon Valley
- 11 Spreyton
- 12 Tamar Valley

South Australia

Small but historically significant apple-growing state. Main orchard region is:

- 13 Adelaide Hills

Western Australia

WA's apple growing is centred on the state's cool southwest. Main regions are:

- 14 Perth Hills
- 15 Donnybrook
- 16 Manjimup



Cider festivals

One of the best ways to enjoy cider is at the source, at one of the cider festivals that now take place each year in apple-growing regions and capital-city venues around Australia. Not only can you visit the orchards where your favourite cider comes from, but you can also learn about cider making directly from the producers.

Batlow CiderFest, Batlow, NSW
www.batlowciderfest.com.au

Kellybrook Autumn Cider Festival, Yarra Valley, VIC
www.kellybrookwinery.com.au/festival

Willie Smith's Huon Valley Mid-Winter Fest, Tasmania
www.huonvalleymidwinterfest.com.au

Huon Valley Mid-Winter Fest **Credit:** Natalie Mendham Photography



Australian Cider Day

#drinkaustraliancider

On the second Saturday of March each year – in the middle of the apple and pear harvest – producers of cider made from 100% Australian Grown fruit organise local cider events, tastings and cider related community-building activities across the country.

“Australian craft cider has come a long way in 10 years. Cider makers are producing some really interesting drinks now. I have high hopes that this is going to continue, and we’ll start to see regional styles – ciders that show different characters depending on where they’re grown.”

Warwick Billings, cider maker

LOBO Cider, Adelaide Hills,
South Australia

“Our family has invested a lot into building what we think is the biggest underground cider cellar in the world.

We think cider can become a real core part of regional tourism here in Gippsland. We don’t just sell cider to our cellar-door visitors – we sell them the story of what cider means to us as a family. The experience, the tradition and culture behind it.”

James Gurnett, manager

Gurneys Cider, Foster, Victoria



THE TERMINOLOGY OF TASTE

Apples and pears are the perfect fruit for making cider because they contain all the components needed to make an alcoholic drink that tastes complete and balanced.

Sweetness

Ripe apples and pears contain between 10–20% sugar, mostly fructose but also sucrose and glucose. This sugar gives the fresh fruit its delicious sweetness – and is also what yeast turns into alcohol during fermentation. Pears also contain a substantial amount of unfermentable sugar called sorbitol, which is why pear cider or perry often tastes slightly sweet and creamy.



Acid

The malic acid in apples and citric acid in pears give the fruits – and the cider made from them – crisp tang and lively freshness in the mouth. The higher the acid, the more tart and sour the fruit – and the cider.



Tannin

Tannins are phenolic compounds that taste bitter and/or astringent on the tongue. Varieties of apple and pear that we eat (e.g. Pink Lady or Packham) contain little or no tannin and produce cider that is not bitter or astringent; apples and pears specifically bred or selected for cider can contain lots of tannin, and produce cider that is full-bodied and grippy in the mouth.





100% AUSTRALIAN GROWN

AUSTRALIAN APPLES

Apple varieties – and the ciders made from them – can be as diverse and distinctive as grape varieties and wine. For example, the tart-tasting, high-acid Granny Smith apple produces a clean, crisp, light-coloured cider – but the bitter-tasting, high-tannin Bulmer's Norman apple produces a very different, dark-golden-coloured, rich, chewy cider.

EATING APPLES

(also known as dessert apples or culinary apples)

These are by far the most widely grown varieties in Australia and are mainly produced for fresh consumption, cooking or processing into juice. Most Australian ciders are made from eating apples because their light, sweet flavour and fresh acidity suit the new-world style that the cider producers are aiming for. And the fruit is easily obtainable. Popular apple varieties include:

- » Pink Lady
- » Granny Smith
- » Royal Gala
- » Fuji



Good cider is also made from less-well-known and less-widely-grown heirloom eating varieties:

- » Cox's Orange Pippin (classic heirloom variety first grown in England in 1830)
- » Sturmer Pippin (an old English apple first grown in the 1820s)
- » Lady Williams (thought to be a chance crossing between Granny Smith and an Australian heirloom variety called Rokewood, dating back to the 1930s)



"When we started in 2011 we chose Pink Lady and Granny Smith apples because they were the apples I grew. We also knew they'd make cider that appealed to the Aussie palate. Pink Ladies are well-suited to a medium-sweet style of cider and Granny makes a drier style, with those tart, green characters."

Dave Purcell, apple grower and co-founder

The Apple Thief Cider,
Batlow, New South Wales



CIDER APPLES

Unlike eating apples, traditional cider apple varieties were selected in England and France over centuries for their bitter tannins and tart acidity. Some of these apples can be quite unpleasant to eat – it feels like they're sucking all the saliva out of your mouth when you take a bite. After fermentation, however, they produce a cider that is tangy, full-bodied and characterful. Thanks to the long heritage of apple growing and sporadic history of cider making in this country, 35 different varieties of proper English and French cider apples are available to Australian orchardists, and quite a few have been planted locally or grafted onto existing trees for craft-cider production, with more orchards being established all the time.

"I love when we have people come to our cidery and do tastings. I ask what ciders they've had in the past, and they usually name a brand made by a big brewer. And then they taste ours, made from traditional bittersharp and bittersweet apples, and they say, 'So this is cider! What have I been drinking all these years?' It's exciting when you see that."

Jenny Morey, third-generation fruit grower and co-founder

Cheeky Grog Cider Co.
Goulburn Valley, Victoria

Traditional cider apple varieties are classified by their balance of sweetness, acidity and bitterness. The best traditional ciders are usually blends of all four types of apple.

SWEET

High sugar

E.g.
Sweet
Coppin

BITTERSWEET

High sugar,
high astringency

E.g.
Yarlington
Mill

BITTERSHARP

High acidity
and astringency

E.g.
Kingston
Black

SHARP

Containing
lots of acid

E.g.
Bramley's
Seedling





THE STORY OF GRANNY SMITH

Australia's most famous apple started life in the 1860s as a chance seedling that sprang up in the garden of elderly orchardist Maria Ann Smith at Eastwood, near Sydney. Impressed by the bright-green, hard and crisp apples that the tree bore, Smith's neighbours took cuttings and planted them in their own gardens. By the 1890s the apple was winning prizes at agricultural shows, and 'Granny Smith's seedling' began to be propagated commercially. The distinctive variety is now grown across Australia and around the world.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S OWN APPLES

In the early 1970s, horticulturist John Cripps bred two new types of apple by cross-pollinating the flowers of two varieties, Golden Delicious, an American apple, and the local Lady Williams apple. The two crunchy, sweet and juicy apples he bred he called Cripps Pink and Cripps Red, but we know them by their trademarked names of Pink Lady – now one of the world's most popular apples – and Sundowner. Both are widely used to make Australian cider today.

THE STURMER PIPPIN LEGACY

In the heyday of Tasmanian apple-growing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the stalwart varieties for many orchardists was the Sturmer Pippin. Not only was it valued for its rich golden flavour and good keeping properties (handy for export to the UK), it was also prized as a sweet cider apple. It's hardly grown today, but those few trees that do remain are still cherished by cider makers.

"I started growing cider apples for my own use and for research in 1984, long before cider became as popular as it is today. For many years I couldn't convince apple growers to diversify into cider varieties. Now there is a lot more interest and they are coming to me for advice on what to plant. Cider makers have realised that these varieties of apple can give them extra complexity of flavour."

David Pickering,
cider apple expert and orchardist
Orange, New South Wales



PEAR



Credit: Destination NSW

AUSTRALIAN PEARS

As with apples, so too is there a difference between pear cider made from the sweet, juicy pears we eat and perry made from true, tannic, chewy perry pears.

“To make our perry we use dessert pears like Packham and Lemon Bergamot, which is only grown commercially in South Australia. There are crucial differences between these pears and apples which means you have to handle them differently in the cellar – they have less acid, and they never ferment dry. The other thing is you can’t pick them and crush them too ripe: they need to be firm or they turn into custard, and can ruin your day pretty quickly.”

Damian McArdle, fourth generation pear grower and perry maker

Paracombe Premium Perry,
Adelaide Hills, South Australia

Most Australian pear cider is made from varieties of pear you’ll find on the supermarket shelf, all of which can produce a deliciously fruity drink:

Packham
Williams
Beurre Bosc

Some good, complex and fragrant pear cider is also made from less-well-known and less-widely-grown heirloom eating varieties:

Lemon Bergamot

(a speciality in old South Australian orchards)

Pound Pear

(so-named because each pear can weigh more than a kilo)

Winter Nelis

(an old Belgian pear first raised in the 1820s)

True perry pears, by contrast, can be quite inedible because of their high levels of acid and tannin, but a handful of Australian cider makers are making good perry from them. Varieties include:

Yellow Huffcap
Green Horse
Gin

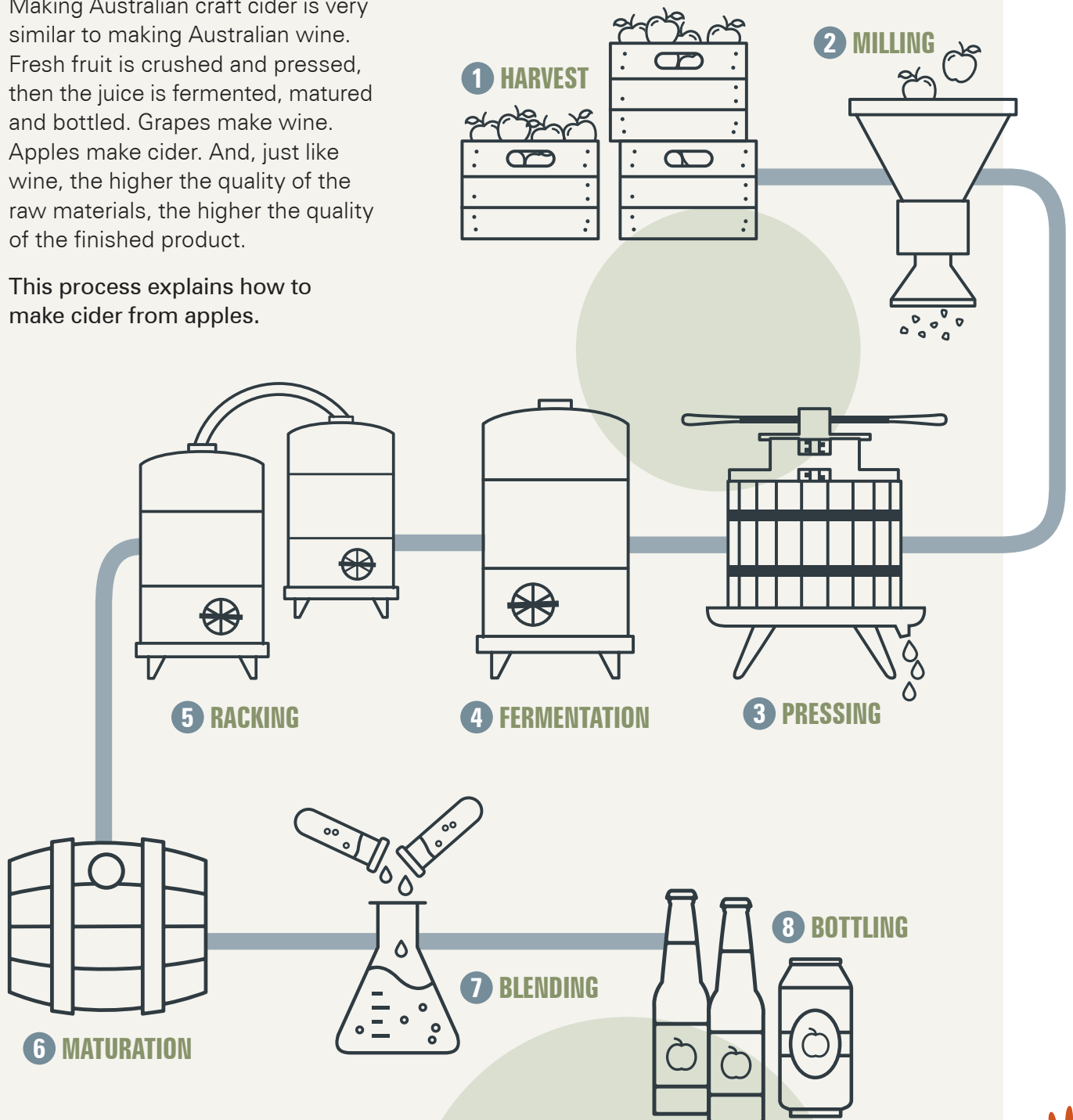


Crafting Australian cider

**HANDPICKED.
HANDMADE.**

Making Australian craft cider is very similar to making Australian wine. Fresh fruit is crushed and pressed, then the juice is fermented, matured and bottled. Grapes make wine. Apples make cider. And, just like wine, the higher the quality of the raw materials, the higher the quality of the finished product.

This process explains how to make cider from apples.



1 Harvest

Apples are picked or gathered from the ground then processed immediately or, more often, stored in cool conditions for a few weeks. This storage time can soften the apples, making them easier to crush.

2 Milling

After apples are sorted and washed, they're crushed into a pulp either in a machine that resembles a giant grater, or passed through a set of rollers fitted with blades. The resulting porridge-like pulp is most commonly pressed straight away, but some traditional makers leave it to macerate for a few hours to develop more complex flavours.

3 Pressing

The traditional method for pressing juice is called 'rack and cloth'. Parcels of pulp are wrapped in a porous material like hessian or shade cloth. The maker builds a stack of these parcels, alternating them between wooden racks. This is then squeezed in a hydraulic or hand-cranked press and the juice is collected in a vessel, ready for fermentation. Other modern techniques include placing pulp in a large stainless-steel tank with perforated walls that contains a membrane bag. As the bag is pumped up with air or water, it squeezes the pulp against the insides of the tank, forcing the juice through the perforations.

4 Fermentation

The most important part of the process: converting sugar in the juice to alcohol. Some traditional makers let this happen naturally, allowing wild yeasts living on the fruit and in the air to start fermenting of their own accord. Most cider makers, though, will add sulfur dioxide to the juice to inhibit the wild microbes and then add a specific strain of cultured yeast, preferring to have more control over the flavour. Fermentation

can take a few weeks to a few months, depending on the type of yeast used, the volume of the juice and the temperature of the cellar.

5 Racking

Towards the end of fermentation, or after it's complete, the cider is 'racked' by siphoning or pumping it into another tank, leaving the dead yeast cells and apple solids behind in the fermentation tank.

6 Maturation

The cider is then left in-tank to settle and clear. In most cases, the cider is clarified and then packaged soon after racking, but some cider makers leave their cider to mature for a few months, either in-tank or in oak barrels, to develop more complex flavours.

7 Blending

Many ciders are blends of more than one variety of apple, and more than one fermentation batch. This is done for a number of reasons – for example, blending a high-acid, tart-tasting cider with a lower-acid, rounder-tasting cider produces a more balanced drink. This is also the stage when other things – cherry juice, for example, or ginger, or hops – can be blended in to produce flavoured cider.

8 Bottling

Most Australian cider is sweetened before being packaged with the addition of some apple juice. The cider is then sterile filtered (to stop it re-fermenting), carbonated and put into a bottle, can or keg. Some producers prefer to make their ciders fizzy by 'bottle conditioning' or adding a little juice or sugar to the cider after it's clarified and before it's bottled, resulting in a secondary fermentation in-bottle.



OTHER CIDER MAKING *techniques*

Method

Traditional

**also called
'methode traditionnelle'**

The term used for cider that's made like high-quality sparkling wine. After a secondary, fizz-producing fermentation in the bottle under crown seal, the cider spends some time maturing and is then disgorged. The bottle is held upside down until yeast sediment collects in the neck, which is dipped in very cold brine, freezing the plug of yeast inside. The bottle is then turned upright and the seal opened – CO₂ forces the yeast plug out, and the clear sparkling cider is topped up and resealed.



Keeving

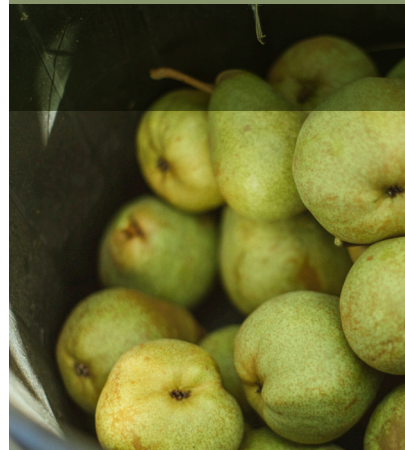
A traditional French technique now practised by adventurous Australian cider makers to make a naturally sweet and sparkling drink. The cider maker adds calcium and enzymes to freshly pressed murky-brown juice, which causes a pectin gel to form and rise to the surface, leaving clear golden juice below, which can then be racked into another vessel. This clear juice is low in yeast and nutrients and ferments very slowly over winter, allowing the cider maker to bottle with some residual sweetness and a gentle fizz.



Pear cider and

traditional perry

While the processes used to make new-world pear cider are very similar to those outlined here for making apple cider, traditional perry, made from tannic perry pears, is produced a little differently. First, pears are left to soften after picking; second, the pear pulp must be left to stand after initial crushing to get rid of some of the tannins; and third, perry must undergo a secondary fermentation while maturing.



"I've been making cider using the keeving method for over a decade. It's a much more difficult, much more challenging process – you need to monitor the ferment and keep it at a low temperature for months – but I feel the rewards are worth the extra effort. The process introduces a variety of wild yeasts that produce a range of interesting flavours, and greatly increase the complexity of your cider."

Dr Clive Crossley, cider maker
Red Sails Cider, Middleton, Tasmania





Australian cider

STYLES AND FLAVOURS

WHAT NATURE TASTES LIKE

Broadly speaking, there are two main approaches to cider making in Australia: the 'new world' approach and the 'traditional' approach. Understanding these two ways of thinking about how cider is made is the key to appreciating the wide range of styles available to you, the cider drinker.



Credit: Destination NSW





“The new world style has come about through cider makers taking Australian-grown culinary apples and pears and applying cutting-edge production techniques – many of them adopted from modern winemaking – in creative and interesting ways.”

Sam Reid, co-founder

Willie Smith's Cider Makers,
Huon Valley, Tasmania

“We are unashamedly making cider in a new world style, 100% Adelaide Hills apples, no concentrate. We have full control of the process, from land to hand. We work with growers to get exactly the quality of fruit we need to get the styles of cider we want. We only crush fresh fruit, in batches, as required, and ferment the juice slow and cool to keep aromatics and freshness.”

Steve Dorman, co-founder

The Hills Cider Company,
Adelaide Hills, South Australia

NEW WORLD CIDER

The intention in making a new world cider – also called 'modern', or 'contemporary' cider – is to produce a drink that is clean, clear, fresh and fruity. The techniques employed – e.g. the use of eating apples, preventing the oxidation of the pulp or juice, fermenting cold in stainless-steel tanks – all aim to result in a cider with fresh flavours and crisp acidity. The vast majority of Australian ciders are produced this way, in the 'new world medium' style.



Tasting AUSTRALIAN NEW WORLD CIDER

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



APPEARANCE

Water-white to pale yellow in colour; brilliantly-clear; usually sparkling.

SMELL

Lively and fresh; aromas of fresh fruit; hints of white-wine-like vinosity.

TASTE

Produced at varying levels of sweetness, from bone-dry to juice-rich; most new world Australia cider is crisp and refreshing, balanced by fruit sweetness.

BODY

Light-bodied to medium-bodied.



ALCOHOL

5-8%



FOOD MATCHES

Bold, fresh, summery food



Salt and pepper squid



Mediterranean salads



Grilled prawns





TRADITIONAL CIDER

The intention in making a more traditional style of cider in Australia is to produce a drink stylistically influenced by 'old world' cider countries such as England and France. These are typically fuller-bodied in the mouth, showing more savoury, fermentation-derived flavours, and more textural, grippy characters on the tongue. The techniques used – e.g. use of cider specific fruit, maceration and oxidation of the pulp and juice, fermentation or maturation in oak barrel – aim to build complexity and mouthfeel in the cider. A growing number of Australian ciders are being produced this way, along traditional lines.

“We opened our cidery and cellar door in 2012, and have built up a good local market, with thousands of visitors a year. We’ve seen attitudes changing in that time; there’s a growing awareness that craft cider isn’t a cookie-cutter industry where all ciders just taste like each other. There’s more interest now in cider specific apples and traditional cider making techniques.”

Damien Viney, fourth-generation apple grower and cider maker

Spreyton Cider Co., Spreyton, Tasmania



Tasting AUSTRALIAN TRADITIONAL CIDER

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



APPEARANCE

Pale yellow to deep amber or golden in colour; from crystal clear to cloudy; from flat and still to lively and sparkling.

SMELL

From vivid fresh-fruit to richer bruised fruit and spice, and even earthy farmyard aromas.

TASTE

Produced at varying levels of sweetness, from bone-dry to apple-juice-rich; most traditional Australian cider is dry and can have some bitterness and astringency.

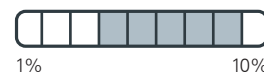
BODY

Medium-bodied to full-bodied; sometimes with bitterness and astringency on the tongue if traditional fruit varieties are used.



ALCOHOL

4-9%



FOOD MATCHES

Robust, savoury foods



Roast pork and apple sauce



Grilled salmon and cream sauce

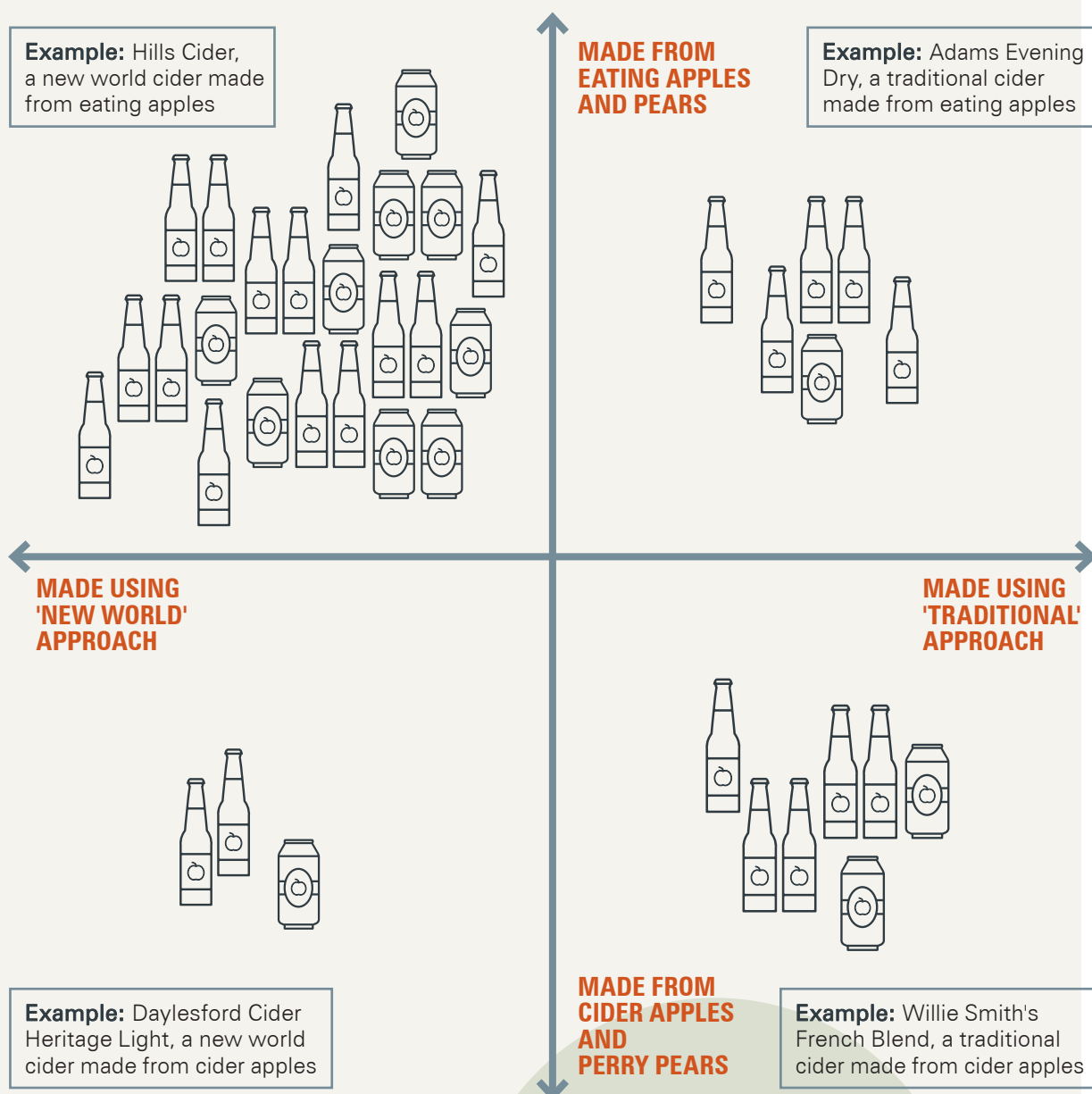


Oozing, pungent white mould cheeses like Brie



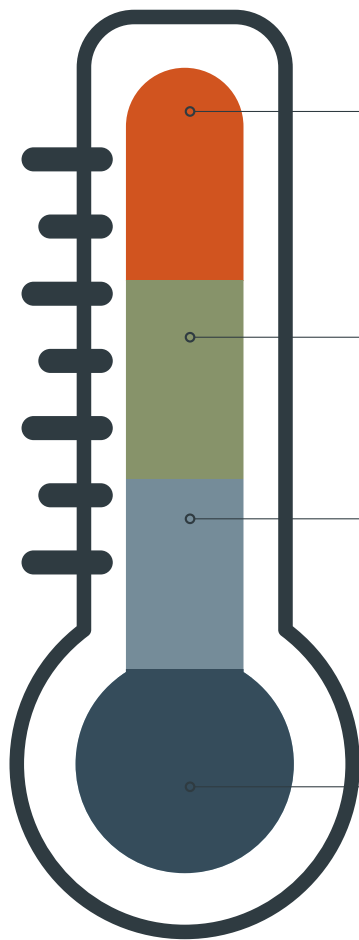
Most Australian ciders are found in the top left of this chart and are made from eating apples and pears using the new world approach. As more and more craft cider makers plant cider apple trees (and perry pears) and explore traditional cider making styles, a growing number of Australian ciders are appearing in the

bottom right. There is a spectrum of thinking that runs from 'new world' to 'traditional' – it is possible, for example, to produce clean, crisp, fruity new world ciders using traditional cider apples (bottom left) and cloudy, funky, chewy traditional styles of cider from modern eating apples (top right).



THE CIDER SWEETNESS SCALE

Both new world and traditional Australian ciders can range from bone-dry to super-sweet, depending on how much sugar is left after fermentation, or how much sweet juice the cider maker blends back into the cider before bottling.



Sweet

Obvious, round, even luscious sweetness on the tongue (more than 40g per litre of sugar).

Medium-sweet

Pronounced but balanced sweetness (between 25–40g per litre of sugar).

Medium

Noticeable sweetness (between 9–25g per litre of sugar) but, depending on how high the balancing acidity is, can still taste quite dry.

Dry

No residual sweetness, or just a hint of sweetness (less than 9g per litre of sugar).

Tasting sweet cider

Sweeter ciders, especially very sweet styles such as ice cider and pommeau, are best enjoyed cool, in smaller tulip-shaped glasses, just like dessert wines. This allows the cider's rich perfume to be fully appreciated. These styles of

cider are best matched with apple-based desserts and strong cheeses such as:

- » Tarte Tatin, the classic French caramelised apple tart, served with vanilla ice cream
- » Rich, salty blue cheese like Roquefort



Australian cider

STYLE GUIDE

METHOD TRADITIONAL OR 'METHODE TRADITIONELLE'

Cider that goes through secondary fermentation in the bottle and is then disgorged. Can be made in both new world and traditional fashion.



CLOUDY CIDER AND SCRUMPY

Cloudy cider is not clarified or filtered before being put into a keg, can or bottle. It often has a little more body and flavour than other new world crystal-clear, filtered cider. The traditional English word '**scrumpy**' is used to describe 'rustic' apple cider that is often wild-fermented, unfiltered and cloudy, usually dry, higher in alcohol and full of sometimes-funky, barnyard flavours.



FARMHOUSE CIDER

A term often used for Australian ciders made in the tradition of keeved French *cidre* or English oak-matured West Country cider: deep golden in colour and full of complex flavours from bittersweet and bittersharp apples.

APPLE AND PEAR CIDER

Some cider makers, both new world and traditional in approach, blend apples and pears together to make cider. The tart acidity in the apples is balanced by the soft sweetness of the pears.

FRUIT FLAVOURED CIDER

Made by blending apple or pear cider with the juice of other fruits. Traditional choices include cherries and quince, but new world ciders are blended with exotic ingredients such as pineapple and ginger.



CYSER

Cider blended with mead, a traditional drink made from fermented honey.



ORGANIC CIDER

Cider produced from apples or pears that have been grown in a certified-organic orchard, farmed sustainably without the use of synthetic chemicals.

OAKED CIDER

Cider that is matured – and sometimes fermented – in oak barrels before bottling. This process adds savoury flavours of toasty wood and sweet vanilla to the finished drink.

HOPPED CIDER

Made by adding hops to cider. The hops contribute aromatics and a touch of bitterness often lacking in cider made from eating apples.



ICE CIDER

Golden, intensely sweet and tangy cider made from frozen apple or pear juice. The freezing process concentrates the sugar and acidity.



EAU DE VIE

Made by distilling apple or pear cider and bottling the clear spirit straight away.



APPLE BRANDY OR CIDER BRANDY

Made by distilling cider and then maturing it in oak barrels for at least two years before bottling to develop a distinctive golden colour and complex, spicy oaky flavours.

FORTIFIED CIDER

Made by adding spirit such as apple brandy to cider to increase the alcohol content. Includes pommeau, which is sweet cider and/or apple juice blended with apple brandy and matured in oak barrels.





Credit: Tourism Tasmania and Jonathan Wherrett

“There’s big demand for fruit-flavoured cider; it doesn’t have to be just made from apple and pear. My brother and I never had limits in mind as to what cider could be when we started making it. We’ve just been non-stop trying new combinations – oak-ageing, blending with passionfruit, pineapple. People just want something different that tastes good. It’s about fun and flavour.”

Martin Michael, co-founder
FUNK Cider
Swan Valley, Western Australia

Tasting Method Traditional cider

Treat this style of cider the same way you would a sparkling wine, drunk cold from a flute-shaped glass as an aperitif, before a meal or with the kind of food you’d match with any bubbly:

- » Oysters
- » Smoked salmon

“When I do consumer tastings I can see people really starting to understand that cider is so much more than just an alcopop-style drink. They can see that cider’s more like wine, with different varieties of apple producing different-flavoured ciders that taste great with different kinds of food. It changes their whole mindset, and gives them an entirely different appreciation of what cider is and what it can be.”

Michael Henry,
second generation cider maker
Henry of Harcourt, Victoria



Credit: Samuel Shelley





Credit: Destination NSW

WHEN TO DRINK

Most new world ciders are best drunk soon after they are packaged and sold, to best appreciate the fresh-fruit flavours. More traditional styles of cider – especially those made from tannic cider apples and perry pears – can mature and improve in the bottle, like wine, for a few years after they are made.

MULLED CIDER

Perfect for a cold winter's night. Warm a litre of medium-sweet cider gently in a saucepan with some slices of apple and orange, a sprinkling of brown sugar or honey, and a few whole bold spices such as cinnamon sticks and star anise. Feel free to improvise with additions: a slug of apple brandy, perhaps, or a knob of smashed ginger. Bring to a simmer and let it stand for a while before ladling into warmed mugs.

COOKING WITH CIDER

Just as wine and spirits are a cook's best friend, cider can be used as a versatile ingredient in the kitchen:

- » Use a dry traditional cider to steam mussels
- » Brine poultry using medium new world cider mixed with salt and spices
- » Braise chicken or rabbit in cider
- » Use pear cider to deglaze a pan and make a sauce after frying fish or meat
- » Use apple cider vinegar to dress salads.



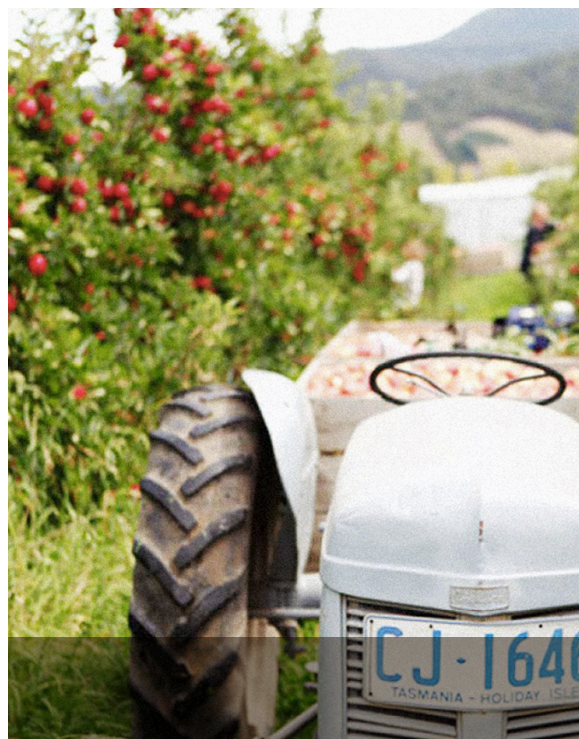
Credit: Samuel Shelley





Australia's growers and cider makers are gifted with sun, soil and high-quality fruit. But it's their pioneering spirit, their neighbourly collaboration and their sense of adventure that allows them to craft diverse, authentic cider and continually pursue the real.

Credit: Tourism Tasmania & William Smiths & Sons, Ali Nasseri





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www.cideraustralia.org.au

info@cideraustralia.org.au