

# HARD CIDER INDUSTRY BARRELING FORWARD IN COLORADO

BY JOHN GARVEY

There are easier ways to bring home the bacon than opening a hard cider company in Colorado. It takes around 11 pounds of apples to produce one gallon of fermented cider. This presents a major challenge in a state where the cost of warehouse space is skyrocketing and apple production is anemic compared to decades past.

"We don't have the orchards like they have in the Pacific Northwest, and we don't have the warehouse space where they can store a year's worth of apples," says Jennifer Seiwald, owner of Scrumpy's Hard Cider Bar in Fort Collins.

Seiwald has worked with property owners to revitalize fallow orchards and recently acquired Branch Out Cider. Branch Out's "Community Orchard" concept is a cooperative model where member households – most within a few miles of production – contribute apples from their own yards.

"Finding fruit is always going to be a challenge, but I think the community orchard and revitalizing what we have here is going to help me do that," Seiwald says.

Brad Page, of Colorado Cider Co. in Denver, has also taken a strategic approach, planting a 3,000-tree orchard to address the weighty concern of sourcing fruit. It yielded its first crop last year.

"We hope to tie back the industry to locally grown apples. We've spent an inordinate amount of time working on the orchard with, thus far, very little production, but it will get there. I think that's really exciting in the long run."

There's a lot you can do with cider that you can't do with beer. Scrumpy's and Colorado Cider Co. crafted strawberry basil, lavender rosemary, cherry, lemon zest and other floral and fruity ciders.

"Cider is more like wine," notes Page. "You don't have a lot of that competing flavor that you do in beer. You're not trying to overcome hops or big malt profiles, so you can have those botanical elements a little more in balance with the cider."

There are also hundreds of obscure varieties of heirloom apples that are great for making cider. As they become better understood and orchards are revitalized, the industry will continue blossoming.

## CIDER BY THE NUMBERS

**21**  
Cider producers in Colorado

**1**  
Cider producer in Colorado before 2008

**9**  
Colorado outranks all but eight states by number of cider producers

**16**  
Cider producers that feature tasting rooms

**2015**  
The biggest year for the cider industry's growth nationwide, and this is also true for Colorado, where seven cider-producing businesses (not all primarily cideries) opened

**702**  
Number of cider makers in the U.S., according to the best available data

**492**  
Number of those 702 that are primarily cideries; the other 210 are breweries, wineries and meaderies that also produce cider