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Cider and Perry

Aim and learning outcomes

This chapter aims to introduce readers to the world of cider and perry. On completion of it, the learner should be able to:

- Describe the legislation, production process and the major types of ciders and Perry made worldwide.
- Explain the principle characteristics of bitter, sharp and sweet apple varieties which contribute to making fine ciders.
- Act on the knowledge and techniques involved in the evaluation and tasting of different ciders and Perry.

2.1 Introduction

Cider has been made for thousands of years, and has recently seen a significant rise in popularity. The cider market is one of the fastest growing segments of the drinks industry considered by many, young and old, to be the preferred draught and bottled drink. Cider, once a rural, seasonal drink, has changed in terms of image and perception and is nationally consumed throughout the year. The international market is now comprised of a good range of high quality and well-known brands which are produced in many flavours. Today it can be confidently claimed that there is a cider variety to meet every consumer requirement.

2.2 Cider: definition and legislation governing its production

Cider is the sweet juice of apples that can be consumed as a beverage or used as a raw material in vinegar making. It is typically a clear, golden drink, which can range in colour from a pale yellow to a dark amber rose. It has a fruity flavour and a varying degree of taste from very sweet to tart, and ranging in alcohol content

from 2 to 8.5% ABV, or sometimes higher in traditional English ciders. Brown (1978) notes that when sugar or extra fruit has been added and a secondary fermentation increases the alcoholic strength, a cider is classified as apple wine in the USA. Sweet cider is the non-alcoholic versions of cider and it can be made into apple juice by pasteurizing it and adding preservatives to stop the natural fermentation process. Hard cider is the product that results when the juice is allowed to undergo fermentation. This cider contains alcohol, and is often effervescent due to the activity of the natural yeasts present.

Cider may be made from any variety of apples, but certain cultivars grown solely for use in cider are known as cider apples (NCAM, 2012). The United Kingdom has the highest per capita consumption of cider, as well as the largest cider-producing companies in the world (NCAM, 2012).

Cider is also popular and traditional in Ireland; France, Brittany (where it's called *chistr*), Normandy (*cidre*); Spain, Basque Country (*sagardo*), Asturias and Galicia (*Sidra*); Sweden; Germany, Rheinland Pfalz, Hessen and Frankfurt am Main (and called *Most*, *Viez* or *Apfelwein*); Argentina, the provinces of Río Negro and Mendoza; and Australia, Tasmania.



Figure 2.1: Cider, from the apple to the bottle (Natural Organic Cider)

Cider in the European Union

There is no common EU legislation covering cider, unlike for instance wine. The Association of the Cider and Fruit Wine Industries of the EU (L'Association des Industries des Cidres et Vins de fruits de l'U.E.), AICV, is an organisation of the producers with members from 11 cider and fruit wine producing countries within the EU. According to the Code of Practice set out by AICV, cider and perry are derived by the fermentation of the juices of apples or pears respectively without at any time adding distilled alcohol. Cider is produced from apples and possibly a limited volume of pears' and likewise perry is produced from pears and possibly a limited volume of apples. Cider and perry can be still or carbonated either by secondary fermentation or the injection of carbon dioxide. Its alcoholic strength varies between 1.2% and 8.5% by volume. The fortification of cider and perry by adding distilled alcohol is not permitted. The use of concentrate and the addi-

tion of flavours, colourings or preservatives are not mentioned and thus fully accepted. Neither the amount of fruit juice nor the limited volume of pears/apples in cider/perry is defined. The definition includes the alcoholic cider, but not the soft drink cider.

Cider in the United Kingdom

In the UK the relevant law covering cider is the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979. For information reference is made to HM Customs and Excise Public Notice 162, Cider and Wine production:

- In cider only 25% pear juice is allowed and in perry only 25% apple juice is allowed
- Colourings may only be used to produce cider or perry in the colour range straw/gold/golden brown
- There is no limit for adding sugar or water
- Preservatives are permitted according to the food legislation.

Cider is liable to duty, when the alcohol content is between 1.2 and 8.5% vol. Above 8.5% it is considered wine. The use of concentrate is permitted and there is no lower limit for the juice content. The soft drink cider below 1.2% alcohol exists in the Notice. The RTD-cider is called alcoholic carbonates or alcopops. The British organisation for producers of cider and perry, National Association of Cider Makers (NACM), accounts for more than 90% of the cider sales in Britain.

NCAM code of practice

Cider is defined as a beverage obtained by the partial or complete fermentation of:

- The juice of apples (and pears, if desired, provided that no more than 25% of the mixed juice is pear), either fresh juice or from concentrated juice or from a mixture of both
- With or without the addition before or after fermentation of sugars and/or of potable water
- Without at any time adding alcoholic liquor
- Without at any time adding any substance which gives colour or flavour, other than certain specifically permitted ingredients.

The alcohol content must be greater than 1.2% alcohol by volume (ABV) but less than 8.5% ABV. NACM considers cider at 8.5% ABV or more to be Apple Wine. In the case of perry, NACM requires that no more than 25% of the juice may be from apples. This Code of Practice is in full accordance with AICV Code of Practice. The soft drink cider is not included, but the RTD-cider is. The British beer consumer organisation CAMRA, Campaign for Real Ale – has set up a committee to promote traditional cider and perry called Apple and Pear Produce Liaison Executive (APPLE).