



Ellie's NONALCOHOLIC CIDER

Sources: Gravenstein, Laura's Orchard, Sebastopol; Wickson, Vulture Hill Orchard, Sebastopol

Ag Practices: Organic, dry-farmed

Harvest: 2022

Production: Cider fermented with native yeasts, unfinned, unfiltered. Alcohol removed with spinning cone vacuum distillation. Low-heat pasteurization for shelf stability. Released 12/10/22.

Numbers: Less than 0.5% ABV | 17 g/L sugar

Ingredients: Dealcoholized Gravenstein cider, Wickson juice, organic cane sugar, carbon dioxide (carbonation), sulfites (~40ppm)

Cases: 53

Label Model: Our cat Monkey

Following my breast cancer diagnosis in 2021, I had to cut way back on alcohol. It felt incredibly disorienting since so much of my life and work revolves around the making, thinking about, and drinking of alcohol. I began exploring nonalcoholic options but was bummed to find that the only NA "ciders" on the market were simply apple juice.

So we decided to make a proper dealcoholized cider so I could drink more of our stuff. As with all of our ciders, it's made with Sonoma County dry-farmed organic apples. We started with a base of wild-fermented Gravenstein cider, and then had the alcohol gently removed using state-of-the-art spinning cone vacuum distillation to retain flavor and aromatics. We then blended in Wickson juice and a bit of organic sugar, and voila!

What does it taste like? A Tilted Shed cider! Bright, sparkling, full-bodied, well structured, with notes of golden apple, clementine, and lemongrass, a smidge of tannic grip, at less than 0.5% ABV. The sugar content is 17 grams/liter, but due to how the dealc process accentuates tannin and acidity, the cider tastes dry.

You'll notice I named it after myself...Ellie's. After all, we made it for me! But I would love for everyone to enjoy it too. My hope is that Ellie's will help create a more inclusive, welcoming atmosphere for those who choose a low- to no-alcohol lifestyle for whatever reason. —*Ellen Cavalli*



QUINCE PARTY

Composition:

39.5% Pineapple Quince, Solana Gold, Sebastopol
36% Jonathan, Meyer Farming, Sebastopol
24.5% Carignan, Trimble Vineyard, Mendocino County

Ag Practices: Organic, dry-farmed

Harvests: 2021 & 2022

Production: All fruit fermented with native yeasts, unfinned, unfiltered, ~20ppm sulfites. 2020: Quince ground and macerated in macro bin for 18 hours, then pressed and fermented. 2021: Carignan macerated on Jonathan juice, fermented in neutral French oak barrel. Blended and bottled in 2022. Released 12/10/22.

ABV: 9%

Cases: 18

Tasting: Racy, with boisterous acidity, tropical aromatics, and herbaceous berry notes. Wild, weird, wonderful!

Don't mistake Pineapple quince for pineapple and quince! Rather, 'Pineapple' is the cultivar name for a quince variety bred by Luther Burbank at his experiment farm in Sebastopol. The size of the fruit varies from big to ginormous, with a dull yellow, slightly fuzzy peel. Raw and unripe, quince is wincingly acidic and inedible but has incredible pineapple-y aroma. As it ripens, the flavors become sweeter, and the flesh browner, in a process called bletting. Quince is a difficult fruit. It is so dry and large that it clogs up our grinder and pump, and doesn't yield much juice. So over the past few years of working with it, we've learned to use a mix of both unripe and bletted fruit for a balance of flavors, acidity, and aromatics. We grind with our small old 0.5-hp Oesco grinder into 5-gallon buckets and dump the pomace into a macrobin, then let it macerate in the cellar overnight to juice up. The next day we shovel the juicy pomace into the press, and finally, the laborious process is over.

100% quince wine isn't for everyone! It is zingy and mouth puckering, bold with trippy tropical aromatics that deepen as it ages. Ellen likes it; Scott not so much! So this batch has been hanging out in the cidery since 2020 as we considered whether to release it as a single-variety or save for a blend. We ultimately decided to do both! We will release the SV in the spring, but for this release, we thought it would be fab blended with a Carignan-Jonathan coferment that we had intended to release as the second vintage of Block Party. And it is delish—a quince party for sure!



2020 Jonathan Pét-Nat

Composition:

100% Jonathan, Nana Mae's Organics, Sebastopol

Ag Practices: Organic, dry-farmed

Harvest: 2020

Production: Pressed 9/8/20. Fermented with native yeasts in neutral French oak barrels, unfinned, unfiltered, ~30ppm sulfites. Bottled at 1.007 SG prior to completing fermentation for pet-nat, 4/6/21. Hand riddled. Hand disgorged 11/27/22. Released 12/10/22.

ABV: 9%

Cases: 40

Tasting: Honeycomb and caramel notes with a burst of zingy flavor, lovely mousse, so yummy

When we started Tilted Shed, we were on the cider apple train in a big way. We had convinced ourselves that only the varieties bred or selected for fermenting into cider—those with high tannins or acidity that rendered the apple fairly inedible—were the superior apples. Heirloom multipurpose varieties, like those that surrounded us in Sebastopol, were fine and we would use them, but they couldn't compete against the Kingston Blacks or Muscat de Bernays of the orchard world. As is the case with beginners, we were wrong. Of course, cider apples are extraordinary and impart loads of nuance and complexity! But so could supposedly mundane varieties, when treated with respect and given lots of time to work their magic. This pet-nat Jonathan is a testament to the latter.

We've made three vintages of champagne-method (aka méthode traditionnelle) Jonathan single-variety cider, but this is the first time we did pét-nat. I like pét-nat as a carbonation method because I feel it retains the freshness of the fruit expression since the cider completes fermentation only one time, rather than fermenting to dryness and bottled with a liqueur de tirage to referment a secondary time for bubbles. With this release, you have the singular opportunity to try two natural carbonation methods on the exact same cider, and compare and contrast. The two 2020 Jonathan ciders in this release were produced in exactly the same way, but two barrels went into the pét-nat and one barrel was bottled in the méthode traditionnelle. Try them in a horizontal tasting, and let us know what you think!



2020 Jonathan Methode Traditionnelle

Composition:

100% Jonathan, Nana Mae's Organics, Sebastopol

Ag Practices: Organic, dry-farmed

Harvest: 2020

Production: Pressed 9/8/20. Fermented with native yeasts in neutral French oak barrel, unfinned, unfiltered, ~30ppm sulfites. Fermented to dryness, then blended with liqueur de tirage (yeast, sugar) and bottled for refermentation in bottle, 7/8/21. Hand riddled. Hand disgorged 11/26/22. No dosage. Released 12/10/22.

ABV: 9%

Cases: 22

Tasting: Sumptuous, textured, caramel overtones with hints of honey

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This is our third vintage of our champagne-method (aka méthode traditionnelle) Jonathan single-variety cider. With this release, you have the singular opportunity to try two natural carbonation methods on the exact same cider, and compare and contrast. The two 2020 Jonathan ciders in this release were produced in exactly the same way, but two barrels went into the pét-nat and one barrel was bottled in the méthode traditionnelle. Try them in a horizontal tasting, and let us know what you think!



2021 Stellata

Composition:

Burford Redflesh, Vulture Hill Orchard, Sebastopol
Pink Pearmain & Pink Pearl, Happy Apples, Healdsburg
unnamed purple crab, Fireball Farm, Sebastopol
Firecracker crab, a local business park

Ag Practices: Organic, dry-farmed, foraged

Harvest: 2021

Production: Fermented with natives yeasts, unfiltered, unfiltered, minimal sulfites (~20ppm). Bottled prior to completion of fermentation for petillant naturel, 10/8/21. Hand riddled. Hand disgorged 11/15/22. Released 12/10/22.

ABV: 9%

Cases: 24

Tasting: Fuzzy tannins, notes of fresh cranberry, lemon, and pomegranate

We love pink- and red-fleshed apples! So much so that for the past 5 years, Ellen has been doing a small-scale breeding project focused exclusively on apples and crabapples whose flesh has red or pink hues. The pigment is caused by anthocyanins, a type of phenolic compound that gives color in all sorts of things you eat and drink. Our friend and club member Will Rea wrote an accessible yet geeky overview of red-fleshed apples and cider in issue 16 of Malus—I highly encourage you to seek out a back copy online (maluszine.com), because he does a much better job describing it than I can. But what we've found over the years of working with these anthocyanin-laded pomes is that those Malus spp. with deep red flesh (e.g. Burford Redflesh, Redfield, Niedzwetzkyana, Firecracker crab, ornamental purple crabs, aka with Type 1 anthocyanins) hold their color during fermentation, with those with pink flesh (e.g. Pink Pearl, Pink Pearmain, aka with Type 2 anthocyanins) generally do not (more on that with a subsequent release). But they all lend characteristic flavors of cranberries, pomegranate, and red berries—not coincidentally other fruits high in anthocyanins!

This vintage of Stellata is a blend of both Type 1 and Type 2, but the color held up really well, and the flavors and aromatics are brisk and beautiful. And befitting of its name, Stellata, which in Latin, means “starry” and “sparkling.”



2020 Farm Reserve

Composition: 40 varieties of apples, crabapples, and pears all grown with organic, no-till practices at our home orchard at Fireball Farm, Sebastopol. Our 5th vintage.

Ag Practices: No-spray, no-till, estate grown

Harvest: 2020

Production: Pressed at the farm and fermented with native yeasts in neutral French oak barrels. Unfiltered, unfined, minimal sulfites. Bottled with liqueur de tirage for méthode traditionnelle, 7/8/21. En tirage for 17 months. Hand riddled. Hand disgorged 11/20/22. Released 12/10/22.

ABV: 10%

Cases: 44

Tasting: Soulful, earthy, lovely, with lots of structure and texture.

In summer 2010, we bought a rundown property on the Gravenstein Highway on the western outskirts of Sebastopol. The house was dilapidated, the sheds tilted, and the weeds waist-high, but we saw incredible potential on these 5.4 level acres. In January 2011, we began planting our first 80 organic cider apple trees. Since then, we have grafted and planted more than 120 different cider apple and perry pear varieties on our farm, primarily tannic ones, from early American Roxbury Russet to iconic colonial favorites like Hewes Virginia crabapple to the English stalwart Kingston Black to obscure French apples like Amere de Berthecourt and California originals like Wickson. This is not a production orchard so much as it is a research orchard, as we want to learn which varieties will do well in our dry-summer, variable-chill-hour, fog-laden, and gopher-invested west Sonoma County terroir. We also have started a seedling nursery—that is, planting apple seeds, which contain vast genetic diversity—in the hopes of growing apples that are uniquely adapted to our changing climate. At last count we have about 700 trees in the ground and 200 seedlings. We employ low-input, no-till organic practices, with the ultimate goal of creating a healthy habit for our trees, us, our babydoll sheep, our chickens, and all the pollinator, bird, and soil life that calls this farm home. The fruit from our home orchard goes into our limited Farm Reserve estate cider. The 2020 batch is our 5th vintage. Cheers!



2020 Fireball Farm Pommeau

Ag Practices: No-spray, no-till, estate grown, organic, dry-farmed

Harvest: 2020

Production: Juice of 40 fresh-pressed cider apples and pears from the 2020 harvest from our home orchard at Fireball Farm, Sebastopol. Blended with our double-distilled, barrel-aged Gravenstein/Golden Delicious apple brandy. Brandy fermented with native yeasts, unfinned, unfiltered, no sulfites added. Double distilled by our neighbors Sonoma Brothers. Aged for 2 years in medium-toast American oak barrel. No sulfites added. Released 12/10/22.

ABV: 19%

Cases: 29

Tasting: Extraordinarily rich and complex, with an earthy sweetness.

In summer 2010, we bought a rundown property on the Gravenstein Highway on the western outskirts of Sebastopol. The house was dilapidated, the sheds tilted, and the weeds waist-high, but we saw incredible potential on these 5.4 level acres. In January 2011, we began planting our first 80 organic cider apple trees. Since then, we have grafted and planted more than 120 different cider apple and perry pear varieties on our farm, primarily tannic ones, from early American Roxbury Russet to iconic colonial favorites like Hewes Virginia crabapple to the English stalwart Kingston Black to obscure French apples like Amere de Berthecourt and California originals like Wickson. This is not a production orchard so much as it is a research orchard, as we want to learn which varieties will do well in our dry-summer, variable-chill-hour, fog-laden, and gopher-invested west Sonoma County terroir. We also have started a seedling nursery—that is, planting apple seeds, which contain vast genetic diversity—in the hopes of growing apples that are uniquely adapted to our changing climate. At last count we have about 700 trees in the ground and 200 seedlings. We employ low-input, no-till organic practices, with the ultimate goal of creating a healthy habit for our trees, us, our babydoll sheep, our chickens, and all the pollinator, bird, and soil life that calls this farm home. The fruit from our home orchard goes into our Farm Reserve estate cider...and now this pommeau!

We took the fresh juice from our home orchard pressing, before it started to ferment, and blended it with a Gravenstein/Golden Delicious brandy from our cider, double-distilled by our neighbors Sonoma Brothers Distilling, then aged the blend in medium-toast American oak barrel for 2 years. The high alcohol in the barrel-strength brandy (110-120 proof) prevented fermentation, so that sweetness you perceive in the pommeau comes from the sugars in the apple juice. As with French pommeaux, ours has a proportion of about one-third brandy to two-thirds juice.