



HOLIDAYS 2020 CLUB RELEASE

Hello and welcome to the 2020 Holidays Club Release! I'd like to welcome our new members to the Tilted Shed fam, and thank our longtime members for their support and love during this, the hardest of years for all of us. And a special thank you to our Cider Club Coordinator Dana Gleis for taking good care of you all!

When Scott and I made our first batch of cider at our little farm in Northern New Mexico in 2007, there was no way we wouldn't have envisioned where we are today. We were new parents—our son Benny was just three months old at the time—and growing food, fermenting it, preserving it, and eating and drinking it was a soul-giving endeavor that balanced out the more cerebral and technical work we were both doing at the time as well as the exhausting life of raising a baby. I was a longtime book and magazine editor (and still am); Scott, a master printer of intaglio, editioning fine art prints. But we had dreams of reconnecting to the earth and lost skills. And so we had left the bustle of city life in the SF Bay Area (where we're from) to try our hand at homesteading on a couple of acres in an old farm village between Santa Fe and Taos. It was after that first batch of cider, fermented in carboys in our barn over the winter, that we discovered there was something special about apples, and we became obsessed to learn and taste everything we could. And as with most people who get into home fermenting, we found ourselves wanting to share the fermented fruits of our labor. (Indeed, we homebrewed beer as party favors for our wedding guests in 2001!)

It's one thing to become nerdy about apple varieties and cidermaking traditions and practices, but none of that means anything unless you have the chance to share it with others. Why else do it? Why do people become chefs, or artists, or musicians, or storytellers, if not to share something of themselves with others, to make others happy, or bring a new understanding of the world around them? And so it is with us. To be able to share these bottles with you, that is why we do what we do. Not for awards (we never enter competitions, and find them problematic to the integrity of cider and antithetical to our ethos on many levels, but I digress). Not for money (though yes, it would be nice to make a living off of it, but I still have other jobs so...). Not to become a brand (if anything, we are deliberately anti-brand!). There is an intrinsic conviviality and indeed communion—not in the religious sense but in the feeling of shared experiences and finding common ground—in getting the chance to send to you the result of years of farming, labor, toil, and joy, captured in a vessel, and opened hopefully with joy and laughter at your table.

The pandemic has ruined a lot, but it hasn't taken away our ability to share with you. I'm very grateful for your support and for your enthusiasm. And I hope what we made for you brings you special moments and smiles during an awfully rough and dark time. But there is light ahead. And my hope is we will be able to raise a glass in person sometime in the near future, because I miss seeing you all! Until then, be safe, wear a mask, and healthy and happy holidays! —Ellen Cavalli

2019 Sunbow

A collaboration apple-grape rosé with our neighbors Two Shepherds. 55% organic dry-farmed Jonathan apples, from Laura's Orchard in Sebastopol, 20% Cinsault, 20% Mourvedre, and 5% Carignan from Mendocino. Cofermented with wild yeasts in neutral French oak barrel. Sparkling. Unfined, unfiltered, very minimal sulfites. Citrusy herbal on the nose, with notes of tart blackberry, dried cranberries, and a touch of marzipan. Like a sunbow, radiant! 40 cases produced. 10% ABV (Label art by Ellen)

2019 Wickson

Single-varietal cider wild-fermented from 100% Wickson dry-farmed and organically grown by Vulture Hill Orchard in Sebastopol. This variety was developed in Humboldt County, Northern California, by apple breeder Albert Etter, in the early 1900s, and introduced for sale in the 1940s. Unfined, unfiltered, minimal sulfites. Full-bodied, light spritz to still, with a long finish, plush, vibrant, and zingy, like liquid lemon curd. Amazing! 51 cases produced. 9%ABV (Label concept by Ellen, watercolor by Scott)

2018 Farm Reserve

The third vintage of our estate-grown and -pressed cider features 41 rare tannic and heirloom varieties from our home Fireball Farm, on the outskirts of Sebastopol. Varieties: Amere de Berthecourt Bartlett pear, Brandy pear, Bulmers Norman, Cap of Liberty, Cimitiere, Court Royal, Doux Normandie, Ellis Bitter, Fillbarrel, Foxwhelp, Frequin Rouge, Golden Delicious, Golden Russet, Gravenstein, Harry Masters Jersey, Herefordshire Redstreak, Hewes, Jonathan, King David, Kingston Black, Knobbed Russet, Major, Metais, Muscadet de Dieppe, Muscat de Bernay, Nehou, Porter's Perfection, wild purple crab, Red Pear, Reine des Hatives, Roxbury Russet, Royal Wilding, Sweet Alford, Tale Sweet, Teign Harvey, Tom Putt, Tremletts Bitter (Geneva), Wickson, Winter Banana, Yarlinton Mill. Fermented in neutral French oak barrel using native yeasts, then bottled using méthode traditionnelle, en tirage for 14 months of in-bottle refermentation, then riddled and disgorged by hand. Notes of creme brulee, dried apricot, baking spice, and overripe apple, with herbal zest and balanced tannic finesse. 38 cases produced. 10% ABV (Label art by Scott)

2019/2020 Stellata

A proper rosé cider! A blend of red-fleshed varieties, including Burford Redflesh (organic, dry-farmed by Vulture Hill Orchard, Sebastopol), Firecracker crab (gleaned from a business park in Santa Rosa), wild purple crab (grown at our home orchard at Fireball Farm, Sebastopol), all from the 2019 harvest, and blended with Pink Pearmain from the 2020 harvest (organic, dry-farmed by Happy Apples, Healdsburg). Wild fermented, unfined, unfiltered, very minimal sulfites. Sparkling. Fuzzy tannins, notes of fresh cranberry, lemon, and pomegranate. The name "Stellata" means starry or starlike, and I think that's befitting of this otherworldly lovely cider, not to mention reminiscent of the color of red-fleshed apple and crabapple blossoms. 9 cases produced. 9% ABV (Label concept by Ellen, watercolor by Scott)

Acorn Pommeau

Inspired by French pommeau, but with a California influence. Our double-distilled Gravenstein brandy, aged one year in medium toast oak barrel, blended with fresh-pressed Roxbury Russet juice infused with roasted acorns. 35% brandy to 65% juice. Aged for 24 months in barrel. Rich, smooth, and sweet, with notes of toffee, candied pecans, and baked apple. Delectable with a cheese plate of dessert, or as dessert. Serve slightly chilled. 9 cases produced. 19.5% ABV. (Label art by Emily York)