



BC
Tree Fruits
Cider Co.

FROM BRANCH
TO BOTTLE

- Jenn Wint -





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It was only a matter of time before the folks at BC Tree Fruits, a fruit-growing cooperative of over 500 grower families located in British Columbia's luscious Okanagan Valley, turned their hand to cider. "It was a natural progression," says BC Tree Fruits Cider Co. Project Manager, Mike Daley. "We have enough variety, and the best fruit to pick from. With apples that weren't destined for the fresh fruit market it made sense to do a value add and actually make our own cider."

Since 1936, BC Tree Fruits has developed a reputation across Canada for growing, packing and marketing apples and summer fruits from BC's Okanagan Valley region, one of Western Canada's popular tourist destinations. Deep-rooted grower partnerships, a rich heritage, and an endless supply of high-quality local apples puts BC Tree Fruits into an enviable position, ripe to become a leader in Canada's craft cider industry with the launch of BC Tree Fruits Cider Co. this spring.

The inaugural offering from BC Tree Fruits Cider Co. is titled Broken Ladder, named for the tall 16-foot ladders once used to harvest apples. Since the introduction of higher density dwarf trees many ladders lie abandoned,

but remain part of the barn and orchard scenery. Broken Ladder's premium cider recipe honours the grower history with a secret blend of six local apple varieties hand-picked from a number of BC Tree Fruits orchards then pressed at their own cidery. The result is a deliciously well-balanced, clean and crisp, traditional, dry craft cider that is true to its roots.

"Taste is paramount," explains Daley. "Almost all apples provide sweetness, which is essential, but you need an apple that's going to provide those bitter flavours to deliver a full palate. Apples to cider are very much like grapes are to wine. It's a balance of acidity and sweetness that creates a perfect taste. We've taken a real grassroots approach to the testing process for Broken Ladder," he continues. "We tested all the varieties separately to develop what we consider the best for our brand. That's how we got to a truly unique and well balanced cider."

The process from start to finish is completed locally at the BC Tree Fruits Cidery in Kelowna, British Columbia, the Okanagan Valley's largest city. Specialized equipment was brought in from Germany for gently pressing the apples, before they're moved into fermentation and carbonating tanks. The process is very similar to the wine-making process, another popular industry in the region, which boasts over 120 wineries. "BC's Okanagan is very much suited to growing apples," says Daley. "Cool evenings and large amounts of sunshine during the day

create a good balance between the sugar and acidity levels we want in the apples.”

The BC Tree Fruits Cider Co. brand begins with a unique relationship with BC apple growers, a deep knowledge of apples, the magic of the region and rich Okanagan Valley grower history. Growers are passionate about their produce, generation after generation. This refreshing culture allows sippers to experience the unique taste of authentic cider made purely from freshly pressed apples. Due to the quality of the apples and the process, apples are all that’s needed on the list of ingredients. The cider contains 100% apples with no added sugars, water, flavour or colourings. This ingredient list is increasingly important as more beverage consumers become interested in authentic brands with transparent origins and ingredients they can pronounce, like 100% BC apples. Craft beers and ciders produced by homegrown producers have never been more popular.

“We’ve tried to separate our cider from many on the market today. Cider has a very loose definition within Canada,” explains Daley. “Throughout our process it was important to stay true to the core and be different to what’s been happening for the last 10-20 years, where ciders have been sweeter and less traditional than a full-bodied and drier cider.” Daley is

hopeful he and his team have developed something worth trying. “It’s our goal to be a premium craft cider, recognized alongside the best ciders from around the world. We want to make something that holds up beside some of the top English-style ciders.” BC Tree Fruits has a strong reputation locally and internationally which dictated the brand design of the Cider Co. The logo uses the leaf on the can and packaging as a way for consumers to recognize the product. “The iconic leaf is a sign of BC-grown quality and we want our fresh fruit customers to be able to easily identify our cider,” says Chris Pollock, BC Tree Fruits Marketing Manager.

The cider hits shelves in British Columbia on April 1st but there are plans to expand the brand across Canada over the next year. Other plans include a single-serve offering of 65-750ml in a champagne-style glass as well as a pear cider variety. Broken Ladder will be sold in 473ml tallboy cans as a four-pack, is gluten free and contains 5.5% alcohol. BCTF Cider Co. will be on BC Liquor store shelves as well as select private cold beer and wine stores and restaurants/pubs.

“This is as real as it gets,” laughs Pollock. “You can see the orchards from the cidery.” “We have certainly put the apples to the test,” adds Daley. “I’m really excited to see where this cider leads us. It’s a totally new direction for the growers but everyone is very excited!” -JW

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