

BOOKS FOR CIDER MAKING

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After now 10 years of cider making and collecting books on the subject, I thought I could share these books and my opinion on them with the NAFEX community.

The first book I got on the subject, and the one I still consider the most useful is by Annie Proulx and Lew Nichols, 1980, Garden Way Publishing: "Sweet & Hard Cider - Making it, Using it & Enjoying it", 188 pages. It contains pretty much everything one has to know to start with this extremely enjoyable activity: basic procedures, recipes, notes on orcharding and cider apples. It is simple enough for the beginner, yet complete enough for the more experienced cider maker to browse through it again and again. It is the book I recommend to anyone who ask me for something on the subject. I know there is now a new edition of this book, but I haven't seen it yet.

Another one that was written with the same objectives is Jo Deal's "Making Cider", published by G.W. Kent inc. in 1985, 94 pages. This one is a bit strange because although it is published in the USA, it's essentially a British book: almost all the cider varieties mentioned are English and the sources mentioned are also in England. Personally, I don't find this book as useful and complete as the one from Proulx and Nichols.

Now, we will get into books that are more specialized. The first is "Cider and Juice Apples: Growing and Processing", Edited by R.R. Williams and published by the Long Ashton Research Station - University of Bristol in England, 123 pages. It is undated but I believe the publication date is approximately 1988. When I read about this book in a magazine, I wrote to the Long Ashton Station to obtain ordering information and, to my surprise, I received the book without any invoice... This book is essentially written for the commercial cider apple growers and cider makers in England. Personally, I enjoyed it mostly for the information it contains about English cider apple varieties.

Another one from the University of Bristol is "Perry Pears", by L.C. Luckwill and A. Pollard, published in 1963, 216 pages. When I enquired about this book 2 years ago, I was quite surprised to learn that it was still available. The cost was 12 English Pounds, transport and taxes included. When I got the book, I realized how good that deal was. The book is beautiful with a hard cover, very old fashioned style and it includes color photographs of 24 varieties plus numerous black and white pictures. This has to be the ultimate reference for the one who considers growing perry pears and making perry. It contains complete description (2 pages for each variety) of over 50 perry pears varieties plus a good chapter on perry making that also explains the differences between cider and perry making.

I should not forget the cider section of the beautiful book by Joan Morgan and Alison Richard "The Book of Apples", published in 1993 by Ebury Press, London, 303 pages. This is an essential book for all apple lovers that also includes useful information for the cider maker. A whole

chapter named "The cider story" is a pleasure to read and the description of the Brogdale cider apple collection is always a nice thing to have on hand.

A report from the Smithfield Research Station of Agriculture Canada in Ontario has been quite useful to me: W.P. Mohr, "Apple Cultivars for Juice and Cider Production", Technical bulletin 1988-6E of Agriculture Canada, 40 pages. This bulletin reports on tests that were done on about 100 apple varieties, including unnamed selections, English cider apples and recent scab resistant apples. The juice was tested for specific gravity, tannin and acidity content and general quality. There are also notes on how the different varieties have done in some test orchards in Ontario and Quebec.

A huge reference was written by R.M. Smock and A.M. Neubert: "Apples and Apple Products", Interscience Publishers, New York, 1950, 486 pages. Lots of technical data on apple transformation in general and also on cider.

I will also tell you about some books in my mother tongue. Roger Dubos (1990) "Pommiers, pommes, cidre et calvados - Méthodes de travail vers 1920 - Nostalgie du temps d'autrefois", Éditions Charles Corlet, France, 127 pages, 1990, is a beautiful book, more poetic than practical. It's all about old Normandy and how things were at the time. Cider and Calvados were the two most important things in Normandy in early 1900's... apart from cheese and thick cream (cows ate a lot of apples at the time).

I also recently got a book from France, "Pommiers à cidre - variétés de France", by J.M. Boré and J. Fleckinger, INRA Editions, 1997, 771 pages. This one definitely has to be the ultimate reference on French cider apple varieties. It summarizes 50 years of work by Fleckinger on cider apples in France. Over 300 varieties are meticulously described and there are numerous photographs and drawings. It is very technical and however lacks more qualitative comments.

Two older books that can still be useful are from Georges Warcollier: "Le pommier à cidre" (1926) and "La cidrerie" (1928), published by J.B. Ballière et fils, Paris, 436 and 484 pages respectively. These are on the old methods used in France and mostly in Normandy in the beginning of the century. It is quite technical, but not too much. An English translation and adaptation of "La cidrerie" was done by L.S. Charley: "The Principles and Practice of Cider-making", published in London in 1949 by Leonard Hill Ltd. I am very fortunate to have these three books available at the University library here in Québec.

I will terminate this review with quite highly specialized books. After having played with cider for about 5 years I started to feel an urge to know more on what really happens in there - I mean here chemistry and biology (I have a highly scientific nature). So I started reading about Oenology. This is a science that was developed rather for wine than for cider. However, the principles are the same for both products and I found this reading quite useful and interesting. I enjoyed mostly the three following books, but there are many more excellent books on the subject.

M.A. Amerine and C.S. Ough, "Methods for Analysis of Musts and Wines", John Wiley & Sons,

New York, 1980, 341 pages.

D. Delanoe, C. Maillard and D. Maisondieu, "Le vin, de l'analyse à l'élaboration", Lavoisier Tech & Doc, Paris, 1984, 164 pages.

Colette Navarre, "L'oenologie", Lavoisier Tech & Doc, Paris, 3rd edition, 1994, 337 pages.

Good reading!