

Swanky Swine – A Shenandoah Connection

Cider Tasting with Blue Bee Cider

Cidery Overview

- State's first urban cidery
- Pioneered the hopped cider style in Virginia
- Named after one of Virginia's native bees, the Blue Orchard/Mason Bee, that is solitary and wild, building nests in small holes rather than hives, and emerging early in cool spring to pollinate apple blossoms
- Founded 2012 in historic Aragon Coffee Roasting building (c. 1904), Manchester
- Moved and opened in Summit Stables, Scott's Addition in October 2016
- Before move, oversaw extensive renovation and historic rehab to Stables property
- Summit Stables built in 1940s as project under Works Progress Administration for horses, carts, and supplies of the Richmond City Public Works Department
- Cobblestones used to construct the building originally came to Richmond as ship ballast from Great Britain, then used to cobble the streets

Founding & History

- Courtney Mailey worked in econ dev for 12 years and left corporate grind in 2010
- Interested in agriculture industry and winemaking, but not red or white wines
- Drawn to cidermaking, attended cider school at Cornell, and apprenticed with Albemarle CiderWorks for one year

Ciders

- Produce artisanal ciders from heirloom Virginia apples on a seasonal basis

- Press apples when ripe (late summer-early winter), ferment over winter, and finish for sale in spring
- All of our ciders are semi-dry and semi-sparkling
- We infuse some ciders: raspberries and blackberries from Agriberry Farm in central Virginia, baby ginger from Casselmonte Farm in Powhatan County, and hops from Colorado
- Offer two reserve apple brandies in collaboration with Catoctin Creek Distillery in Purcellville, Virginia, one of which is barrel-aged for six months and the other which is infused with baby ginger from Casselmonte Farm in Powhatan County

Visit

- Winery-style tastings offered on weekdays only, with ciders available by the flight, glass, or bottle anytime
- Cobblestone cider salon and outdoor patio
- Tasting Room hours: Sun-Wed 1:00–9:00pm, Thurs-Sat, 1:00–10:00 pm

Half-glass pour each of:

- Orchard Potluck: Saison (ft. Gold Rush apples from Northern SV)
- Aragon 1904 (ft. Pippin apples from Southeast-facing slopes of SV)

Tasting of our dessert brandy at the end of the meal:

- Harvest Ration (named a Good Food Awards 2016 finalist!)

Apple Profiles:

Albemarle Pippin

- Originated in Newtown, NY in 18th century. Sometimes called “Newtown Pippin”
- One of Thomas Jefferson’s two favorite apples (along with the Esopus Spitzenburg), and he planted up to 50 Pippin trees at Monticello.

- Ben Franklin is said to have introduced it to England.
- In 19th century, US Ambassador to England and Albemarle native, Andrew Stephenson, presented a basket of Pippins to Queen Victoria. She loved them so much she exempted Virginia apples from import duties (an exemption which remained in place until the 1930s). The Afton Mountain farm where they were grown changed its name to Royal Orchard.
- Ripen in late autumn with olive green skin and greenish-white flesh. Juicy, crisp.
- Our Pippins are grown on the southeastern-facing slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Shenandoah Valley. We use Pippins in our Aragon 1904 cider.

Gold Rush

- Originated in Indiana in 1973, Illinois state apple as of 2008
- Name originates from its golden-bronze flesh and “rush” of flavor
- Rich, complex flavor with spicy notes and high acidity and sweetness
- Late maturing

Cider Profiles:

Orchard Potluck: Saison

0.4% RS, 8.5% ABV. Unfiltered and Semi-Sparkling. Serve chilled.

The Orchard Potluck series features small-batch, single-varietal ciders that highlight the unique characteristics of specific apples, yeasts, and techniques. New releases on a rotating basis.

OP: Saison is fermented with a saison yeast strain at high temperatures, combining the acidity and brightness of Gold Rush apples with spicy and fruity notes from the yeast.

Aragon 1904

3.0% RS, 8.6% ABV. Filtered and Semi-Sparkling. Serve chilled.

Our original flagship cider, Aragon is named after the building Blue Bee first called home. At the turn of the 20th Century, coffee was traded for tobacco along the James River and the Aragon Coffee Roasting building (first recorded in 1904) was constructed in historic Manchester, across the river from downtown Richmond.

Our Aragon 1904 cider is made from a blend of modern and heirloom apples to create a light, crisp, off-dry cider. With minerality and slight earthiness, Aragon is our sweetest, most approachable cider, pairing well with many dishes.

Primary apple: Pippin

Food Pairings: Rich Poultry, Quiches, Chili, Holiday Dinners, Sunday Brunch

Harvest Ration

*11.5% RS, 18% ABV. Filtered and Still. We serve at room temperature, but delicious warmed or chilled as well. **Named a 2017 Good Food Awards Finalist!***

Harvest Ration is named after the tradition in Virginia of apple harvest workers receiving a daily ration of cider and brandy. Each bottle holds roughly the equivalent of one day's ration of both cider and brandy, blended together into a port made from slightly fermented apple juice that has been fortified with apple brandy.

Each year, Blue Bee Cider sends its first batch of cider to Catoctin Creek Distilling Company, a family distillery located in Purcellville, Virginia. The cider is distilled into custom eau de vie, which Blue Bee Cider ages in five-gallon new American white oak barrels. After about six months in the barrels, the brandy is blended into an early-stage ferment comprised primarily of Winesap apples. The resulting fortified cider has a strong spirituous aroma with layers of honeysuckle, butterscotch, and spice with rich, sweet apple notes.

Barrel-aged with a spirituous nose, Harvest Ration is composed of sweet Winesap cider blended with our custom-made brandy. Notes of rich honeysuckle, layers of butterscotch and an apple pie finish.

The Good Food Awards is an annual competition and review of American producers focusing on responsible practices and high-quality taste. From a pool of 2,059 entries, 291 finalists were chosen across 38 states in 14 categories through intense vetting and blind tastings by industry experts. Categories include Beer, Charcuterie, Cheese, Chocolate, Cider, Coffee, Confections, Fish, Honey, Oils, Pantry, Pickles, Preserves, and Spirits. Entrants were reviewed on criteria focused on environmentally-sound agricultural practices, good animal

husbandry, sourcing transparency, and responsible relationships throughout the supply chain. Winners will be announced on November 21st and awarded at a gala in January.

Primary Apple: Winesap

Food Pairings: Bold Cheeses, Creamy Desserts, Sweetened Nuts, Creme Brulee, Spiced Cakes