

The Herald Tribune



Volume # 24 Issue # 5

Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

May 2010

May Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday May 14th. It will be hosted by **Stephen Krebs**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **Cider/Specialty**.

27. Standard Cider and Perry

- 27A. Common Cider
- 27B. English Cider
- 27C. French Cider
- 27D. Common Perry
- 27E. Traditional Perry

28. Specialty Cider and Perry

- 28A. New England Cider
- 28B. Fruit Cider
- 28C. Appleswine
- 28D. Other Specialty Cider/Perry

AABG 2010

January	Randy deBeauclair	BBBW
February	Alex and Claudia Pettit	English Brown Ales*
March	Jack Carr.	American Ales*
April	Brad Sancho OG Brewing	Extract Beers*
May	Stephen Krebs	Cider/Specialty
June	Mark Zadvinskis	Wheat
July	Roger Burns	Mead*
August	Patti Smith Jeff Bletch	Sour Ale*
September	Jeff Renner	Oktoberfest
October	Strong Ale
November	Chris Frey	Porter/Stout
December	Rolf Wucherer	I.P.A.

* Denotes AHA Club Only Competition Style

All meetings are the second Friday of each month beginning at 7:30 p.m., except for the July meeting (BeerBQ) which is the second Saturday.

AABG Pico System

The club's pico system is available to members for brewing. If you wish to borrow it contact Mike O'Brien at:

734.637.2532

picobrew@comcast.net

Access the AABG Club System forum at:

<http://tinyurl.com/29h7yxc>

27C. French Cider

This includes Normandy styles plus ciders inspired by those styles, including ciders made by various techniques to achieve the French flavor profile. These ciders are made with bittersweet and bitter-sharp apple varieties cultivated specifically for cider making.

Traditional French procedures use small amounts of salt and calcium compounds (calcium chloride, calcium carbonate) to aid the process of pectin coagulation. These compounds may be used, pre-fermentation, but in limited quantity. It is a fault if judges can detect a salty or chalky taste.

Aroma/Flavor: Fruity character/aroma. This may come from slow or arrested fermentation (in the French technique of *défécation*) or approximated by back sweetening with juice. Tends to a rich fullness.

Appearance: Clear to brilliant, medium to deep gold color.

Mouthfeel: Medium to full, mouth filling. Moderate tannin apparent mainly as astringency. Carbonation moderate to champagne-like, but at higher levels it must not gush or foam.

Overall Impression: Medium to sweet, full-bodied, rich.

Comments: Entrants **MUST** specify carbonation level (petillant or full). Entrants **MUST** specify sweetness (medium, sweet). Entrants **MAY** specify variety of apple for a single varietal cider; if specified, varietal character will be expected.

Varieties: Nehou, Muscadet de Dieppe, Reine des Pommes, Michelin, etc.

Vital Statistics:

OG: . . . 1.050 – 1.065
 FG: . . . 1.010 – 1.020
 ABV: 3 – 6%

Commercial Examples: [US] West County Reine de Pomme (MA), Rhyne Cider (CA); [France] Eric Bordelet (various), Etienne Dupont, Etienne Dupont Organic, Bellot

France

French *cidre* is an alcoholic drink produced predominantly in Normandy and Brittany. It varies in strength from below 4% alcohol to considerably more. Cidre Doux is a sweet cider, usually up to 3% in strength. 'Demi-Sec' is 3–5% and Cidre Brut is a strong dry cider of 5% alcohol and above. Most French ciders are sparkling. Higher quality cider is sold in champagne-style bottles (*cidre bouché*). Many ciders are sold in corked bottles, but some screw-top bottles exist. Until the mid-20th century, cider was the second most-consumed drink in France (after wine) but an increase in the popularity of beer displaced cider's market share outside traditional cider-producing regions.

In crêperies (pancake restaurants) in Brittany, cider is generally served in traditional ceramic bowls (or wide cups) rather than glasses. A *kir Breton* (or *kir normand*) is a cocktail apéritif made with cider and cassis, rather than white wine and cassis for the traditional *kir*. The Domfrontais, in the Orne (Basse-Normandie), is famous for its pear cider (*poiré*). The *calvados du Domfrontais* is made of cider and *poiré*.

Calvados, from Normandy, is a spirit made of cider through a process called double distillation. In the first pass, the result is a liquid containing 28%–30% alcohol. In a second pass, the amount of alcohol is augmented to about 40%.

Breton cider making employs the technique of keeving (from the French *cuvée*). In keeving, calcium chloride and a special enzyme are added to the pressed apple juice, causing protein in the juice to precipitate to the top for removal. This reduces the amount of protein available to the yeast, starving it and therefore causing the cider to finish fermenting while sugar is still available. The result is a sweeter drink at a lower alcohol level but still retaining the full flavour of the apples, without dilution.



Cidre bouché from Normandy

WHEN AND WHERE

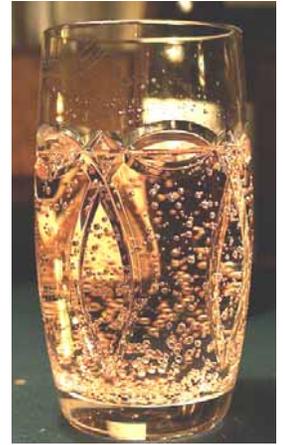
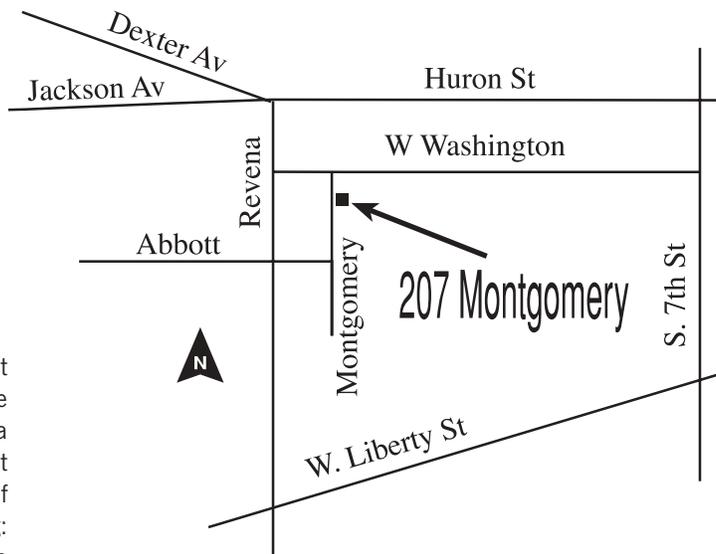
Friday, May 14, 7:30pm
Stephen Krebs
207 Montgomery Ave
Ann Arbor, MI
734 747 7033

Directions

Stephen Krebs's house is located on the East side of Montgomery and is the third house from the corner of West Washington. It is a grey house with white trim and a big front porch. You can park on the West side of Montgomery, but not on the East. Warning: They don't ticket, they tow. There is ample parking on both sides of the street on Washington and Abbott streets.

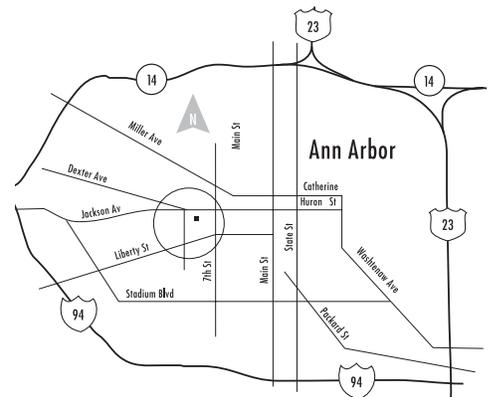
Guide for New Members

Bring 1-2 bottles per batch of your beer that you'd like to share, or an interesting commercial beer. Bring tasty munchies to cleanse the palate and sop up the alcohol. Feel free to share and sample with other members and make and accept constructive comments. Please use good judgment while imbibing and don't drive while intoxicated.



AABG Policy

AABG encourages responsible, legal consumption of homebrewed and craft beers. **You must be at least 21 years old to attend AABG meetings.**



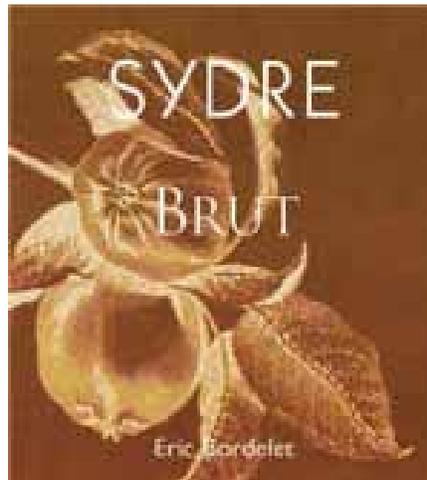
Apple Cider from France

— By Jim Clarke

One of the side benefits of the craft-beer revolution in the late 80s was a revived interest in hard cider. Not only did several American brewers begin making their own cider, but several British companies also got in on the act. **Strongbow** began importing their ciders on a larger scale, and **Woodpecker** even began producing cider here in the U.S. following their Old World recipe.

All this gave a strong beer tilt to cider in America. Ironically, the process of making cider actually resembles winemaking much more than it does brewing. Apples are pressed and the resulting juice is fermented; there is no malting or mixing of hops. But because the marketing and distribution system of beer and wine in the U.S. remain fairly distinct, a more beer-like style dominates the U.S. hard cider market.

French cider makers, however, have long maintained a more wine-like style of cider. Their ciders are often lower in alcohol and less sweet than their British counterparts,



with fruitier flavors, a lighter texture, and higher acidity. Texturally they often resemble Champagne, and in fact they bottle their ciders in similar bottles, with cages and corks. This greater complexity and their acidity in particular make them especially good with food.

Cider's French home is Normandy, where it has been made since the Middle Ages.

Norman cider remains an artisanal, hand-crafted product; larger industrial companies have never gotten as involved in cider making there as they have in England. France and England both have apple orchards with varieties specifically grown for cider, whereas eating apples are used in the U.S. French cider apples are typically small, warty, and unappealing to the eye; they are also relentlessly tart and unpleasant to eat. It is only when they've been pressed and fermented that they show their virtues.

Much of the cider maker's art lies in blending a number of different apple varieties to create a well-balanced beverage. Single-variety ciders are a possibility, but have not been much explored as of yet. The most important skill for a French cider maker, however, may be an obsession for cleanliness. French cider is made without preservatives, and because of its low-alcohol is more susceptible than many beverages to becoming tainted or flawed by infections that could ruin the delicate flavor of the cider. Attention to these sorts of

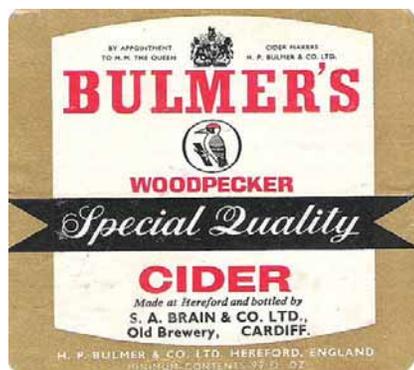
French Cider continued on next page...

difficulties has made French cider more stable and easier to export in the past decades.

Domaine Christian Drouin

Calvados producer Domaine Christian Drouin has been making cider commercially since 1962. Their facility in Coudray-Rabut is a former stud farm which they renovated in 1990; its late Renaissance architecture makes it a beautiful spot to visit. As with winegrapes, mature trees are important for obtaining fruit that will create beverages of depth and complexity. For that reason, Christian Drouin is still sourcing their grapes from older orchards near their former location in Gonnevill-sur-Honfleur while they wait for their orchards at Coeur de Lion to develop.

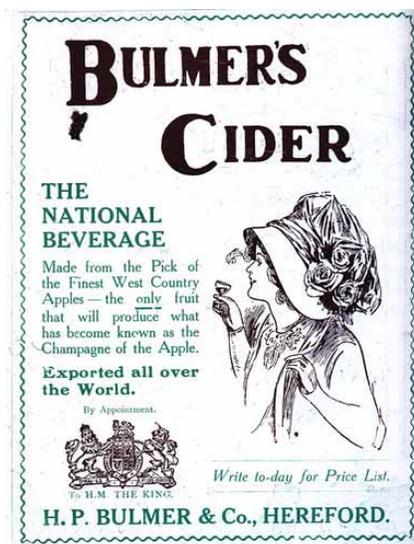
They harvest the trees by shaking them and taking only the fruit that falls, which then finishes its ripening in a loft. Drouin uses about 70% bitter or bittersweet apples, 20% sweet apples, and 10% high-acid apples. After crushing the apples are macerated briefly before being pressed. A lengthy, fermentation follows: 3 months in vats followed by further time in the bottle, where the carbonation can be trapped to give the cider its fine mousse of bubbles. The **Domaine Christian Drouin Cidre Pays d'Auge AOC** is the color of a deep pilsener with a foamy, beer-like head that is belied by the smooth



texture in the mouth. It shows a complex blend of baked apple, cinnamon, and earthy aromas. The appley notes are fresher in the mouth and followed through by a long, gingery finish.

Domaine Dupont

Again, as with grapevines, in orchards with poor soils the trees dig deep for nutrients; consequently they produce fewer but more concentrated, characterful apples. This explains the number of cider makers in the Pays d'Auge region of Normandy. Drouin's neighbor Domaine Dupont has been making cider and Calvados there since 1837. In France, there is even an AOC system for



cider just as in wine, but Dupont has chosen not designate its ciders under the system because they feel that the paperwork process makes it too difficult to get their cider to market when it is freshest. The **Etienne Dupont Cidre Bouché Brut de Normandie 2002** is a medium gold, with a light head. Its apple aromas are quite earthy and rich, balanced out by touches of leather, flowers, and citrus.

Dupont has also recently begun making a completely organic, USDA certified cider, the **Etienne Dupont Organic Cidre Bouché Brut de Normandie 2002** is quite Champagne-like, with a pale golden color and light head. Apple and floral aromas are filled out by honey notes and cinnamon. It's a very refreshing, elegant cider with a long, appley finish.

Eric Borgelet

Eric Borgelet, former sommelier at the three-star restaurant Arpège, may be the ultimate example of how a wine-based approach to cider rules the roost in France. Many sommeliers aspire to eventually become winemakers; encouraged by renowned Loire Valley winemaker Didier Dagueneau, Borgelet

turned his sommelier's eye instead on the ciders of his native Normandy. All of the trappings of classical winemaking make their way into his ciders: old trees, low yields, and terroir all mean as much in the orchard as they do in the vineyard. He produces ciders at three levels of sweetness, all with a light mousse and apple, floral, and spicy notes. However, the highpoints of his portfolio are the "reserve" cuvées **Sydre Argelette** and **Poiré Granite**; the latter is made from 300-year-old pear trees. The Argelette is crisp and elegant, with an aroma and flavor of poached apples leavened by citrus and spice. The Poiré Granite is very Champagne-like and dry; the pear aromas are subtly balanced by citrus, flowers, and earth, and the finish is long and complex.

At the Table

All of these ciders make great matches with food. Apple desserts are an obvious pairing, and many crepes also get along quite well



with cider. But it is on the savory side where the distinctive acidity of French cider can show its values at the table. Cream sauces partner fantastically, as do a number of cheeses: think Brie, Cheddar, or Fontina. Chicken and seafood are also strong possibilities; I was particularly impressed by a pairing of cider with mixed shellfish. The touch of sweetness in the ciders also allows them to balance spicier dishes, which can be problematic with many wines.

One last pairing: When I was a kid it was an autumn ritual for my family to go out to the cider mill and drink cider with fresh cinnamon donuts. These days I find that French cider goes great with donuts, too, and gives a relaxing adult spin to my sentimental seasonal reminiscence.