BALTIC CIDER

www.balticcider.com

news#2

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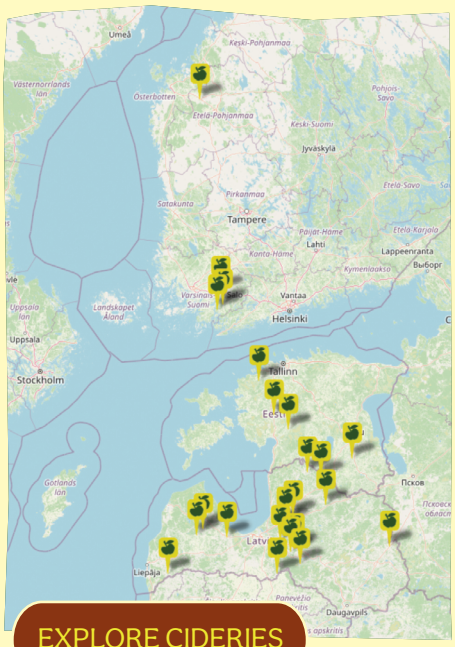
BALTIC CIDER
COOL BY NATURE

BALTIC CIDER COMMUNITY IS GROWING

Since launching the Baltic Cider initiative, we are proud to see more cider makers joining our Baltic Cider community. With seven new producers, we now have 22 cideries in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Finland.



EXPLORE CIDERIES

www.balticcider.com/cideries

LET'S MEET AT THE CIDERCON 2026!

From February 2–5, 2026, we look forward to attending **CiderCon 2026** at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, where we will reconnect with longtime colleagues and meet new faces at this premier U.S. cider event, bringing together producers, industry professionals, and enthusiasts from around the world.

CIDER SHARE WELCOMING RECEPTION ON FEBRUARY 3

At the Baltic Cider table, four cider makers - Abuls, Mr. Plūme, Pienjāņi and Lauskis - will pour their ciders.

PANEL SESSION WORLD OF CIDER: THE BALTIC REGION ON FEBRUARY 5

We will share our stories and explore the character, traditions, and the identity of Baltic cider. Asnāte Ziemele from the Baltic Cider team will moderate the session, and our cider makers–Abuls, Mr. Plūme, and Pienjāņi–will present 3 specially selected ciders for tasting.

EXPLORE CIDERIES WITH OUR NEW TASTING JOURNAL AND VIDEO

To celebrate and promote cider culture, we have created a new tasting journal, complemented by a video featuring Krišjānis Putniņš, owner of Mūrbūdu Cidery, demonstrating how to taste cider properly. The journal serves as a prompt for your senses, suggesting the features you might notice in cider and encouraging mindful enjoyment–appreciating the color, bubbles, aromas, flavors, and finish of each cider–while also providing space to record your own discoveries. With this tasting journal and video, we hope to inspire people to explore and fall in love with authentic cider.

The Tasting Journal also includes a map and contact information for twelve cideries along the Latvian Cider Route, part of the Baltic Cider initiative. Each cidery welcomes visitors to explore their production processes, stroll through cherished apple orchards, and enjoy their finest ciders for tasting and purchase on site.

> "Once you have tasted 15–20 ciders, perhaps 50 or even 100, and used such a sheet to record what you liked and did not like, you will return from time to time to ciders you have tasted before, and you will, in effect, have become a true cider connoisseur. This is how we broaden our horizons."
>
> Krišjānis Putniņš, Mūrbūdu Cider

TASTING JOURNAL AND VIDEO

www.balticcider.com/discover

Interreg
Co-funded by the European Union
Central Baltic Programme
BALT-FIN-CIDER

THE FIRST BALTIC CIDER TRADE MISSION IN AUSTRALIA COMPLETED

From 19 October to 1 November, the first Baltic Cider trade mission to Australia brought together cider makers from Latvia, Estonia and Finland under the shared Baltic Cider initiative. We sincerely thank Cider Australia for their warm hospitality and excellent program arrangements, which provided valuable inspiration and insight into Australian cider culture. The mission was organised within the Interreg Central Baltic project "Export of Baltic and Finnish Authentic Apple Cider to Australia".

celotajs.lv/project

Australian Cider Awards

A major highlight was taking part in the prestigious Australian Cider Awards, the country's largest cider competition. Competing among 231 ciders across 44 categories, **Baltic and Finnish producers were delighted to receive a total of 27 medals** (1 gold, 10 silver and 16 bronze).

THE GOLD MEDAL in the category "Speciality Styles - Cider or Perry with Botanicals" was awarded to **MŪRBŪDU CIDERY** (Latvia) for their "Gin Botanical" cider – a semi-dry sparkling cider matured with traditional gin botanicals such as lemon peel, coriander seeds, orange peel, and juniper berries, characterised by a fresh green apple aroma and a balanced juniper-citrus taste.

CATEGORY WINNERS included **LEPOLA CIDER** (Finland) with "Perry, Lepola" – in the category "New World Perry - Sweet", and **KODAS CIDER** (Estonia) with "Mimikri" – in the category "Traditional Cider - Sweet".

ABAVAS CIDER (Latvia) was additionally recognised for THE BEST PACKAGING DESIGN.

COOL BY NATURE

Check our award winners at: Stories • Instagram

MASTERCLASSES WITH GABE COOK, THE CIDEROLOGIST

The mission also featured engaging masterclasses and tastings in Melbourne and Sydney, led by UK cider expert Gabe Cook, where distributors and industry professionals discovered the fresh, distinctive character of Baltic ciders. The masterclasses were well attended by trade professionals, cider lovers and cider producers.

BRINGING BALTIC CIDER TO OUR COMMUNITY

We were delighted to share Baltic cider with our community at the Melbourne Latvian House, Sydney Latvian House, and Sydney Estonian House, joined by Ms Samija Šerifa, Latvian Ambassador to Australia, Sulev Kalamäe, Honorary Consul of Estonia, and Sabine Kazaka representing the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia. The tastings quickly became lively, heartwarming gatherings. It was especially wonderful to see younger generations of Baltic heritage–many who don't often visit community centres–connecting with their roots through cider. With 50–100+ attendees at each venue, these events highlighted the strength and support of our community. We are grateful to everyone who joined us and look forward to bringing Baltic Cider to future Latvian, Estonian, and Finnish community events.

BALTIC CIDER PRESENTED AT THE 60TH AUSTRALIAN LATVIAN ARTS FESTIVAL IN ADELAIDE

From 26–31 December, the 60th Australian Latvian Arts Festival took place in Adelaide, bringing together the Latvian community for a vibrant celebration of culture, music, and shared heritage. Alongside a rich artistic and social programme, festival visitors had the opportunity to taste and purchase ciders from four Baltic producers: Mūrbūdu Cidery, Abuls, and Sabiles Sidrs from Latvia, and Tori from Estonia.

The ciders were presented at a tasting event by Krišjānis Putniņš, owner of Mūrbūdu Cidery. Over the following days, the stock "disappeared" faster than expected – a clear sign that the fresh, pleasantly tart flavour profiles were very well received. Visitors particularly appreciated the stories behind the ciders: apples grown locally, hand-picked from the year's harvest, carefully fermented at a slow pace, and never stored in cold warehouses. These details added depth to the tasting experience and contributed to a strong sense of shared identity and Baltic pride.

The Latvian Houses in Australia have since expressed their wish to keep these ciders available in their bars and cafés, and we are pleased to begin preparations for the next delivery. Cider culture is increasingly becoming part of our national identity – and, as this event showed once again, cider has a unique way of bringing people together across continents.

VISITING AUSTRALIAN CIDERIES

While travelling from Melbourne to Sydney, the Baltic Cider team visited Australian cideries with impressive orchards, where cider making is closely connected with tourism through tastings, guided tours and welcoming cellar-door experiences. Our hosts were: Darraweit Cider House, Daylesford Cider, Harcourt Cider & Perry, Crafty Cider, Apple Thief Cider House, Darkes Cider, Hillbilly / Bilpin, Small Acres Cyder.

SUCCESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CIDER COMPETITION AT THE 6TH SAGARDO FORUM

The International Cider Competition at the 6th Sagardo Forum took place on 22 November at the Basque Culinary Center in Donostia-San Sebastián. Distinguished tasters sampled 204 ciders from 17 countries, awarding 61 gold, 81 silver and 34 bronze medals. The 'Best of Show' went to Cidonya (Germany), while Latvia's Mr. Plūme Cidery won three medals, including 'Best of Category' for its Semi Sweet Still Apple Cider in the Dominant Acidity category. Sodo Sidrinė from Lithuania is the proud winner of two silver medals.

RESULTS International Cider Competition at the 6th Sagardo Forum
www.sagardoarenlurraldea.eus

HARVEST 2025: A CHALLENGING YEAR ACROSS THE BALTICS

In December 2025, we connected with cideries across Latvia, Estonia, and Finland to gather their reflections on this year's harvest. Here is a concise summary of their valuable insights:

Reduced Harvest and Supply Challenges

This year, the region faced a smaller-than-usual harvest, largely due to spring frost, wet and cold flowering periods, and other climatic factors. Some producers estimate a 30% reduction in crop yield compared to last year. Even cideries that traditionally rely solely on their own apples had to purchase additional fruit to meet production needs.

The Quality of Apples

Overall fruit quality across the region was mixed, with many producers reporting smaller apples, lower sugar levels, and delayed ripening. In several Latvian areas, quality ranged from acceptable to good despite low quantities, though sugars were often below normal. Estonian producers noted average to poor quality, with particularly low sugars in some regions. Finnish producers reported additional challenges from plant diseases, further affecting quality consistency.

Influencing climate factors

The weather patterns–wet conditions, cold bloom periods, temperature swings, and reduced pollination–contributed to challenging growing conditions across all three countries, with Latvia showing the broadest range of stress factors and Finland distinguishing itself with more pronounced temperature variability over the season.

What to Expect in Cider?

Producers across Latvia, Estonia, and Finland generally expect good cider quality. Overall, inconsistent ripeness, reduced variety availability, limited tannins, and a shift toward blending define the regional outlook, with Latvia showing the widest quality variation, Estonia and Finland demonstrating relative confidence.

HOW TO MAKE CIDER BETTER

To support cider makers in achieving their desired cider profiles, collaboration continues with researchers through the Estonian–Latvian joint project "Knowledge-Driven Baltic Cider Production and Branding for Growth and Competitiveness of SMEs." Collaboration partners: the Latvian Institute of Horticulture and the Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in Estonia.

ADVANCING TOWARD A BALTIC CIDER TERROIR DEFINITION

As part of our work to define the Baltic Cider terroir, we are examining how the same apple varieties grown in different Baltic locations influence cider characteristics. For this purpose, we selected three varieties widely cultivated and used in cider production in both Latvia and Estonia: 'Auksis,' 'Dabinett,' and 'Sinap Orlovsky.' Apples from these varieties were harvested from multiple sites in each country and pressed into single-variety juice to be fermented into cider. Experimental cider production is now underway at Abuls Cidery in Latvia, with further chemical analysis planned for 2026 to evaluate and compare cider qualities.

AUKSIS

Origin: Lithuania, 1974.
Cross: 'McIntosh' × 'Gravensteiner'
A highly popular commercial cultivar
Dessert, processing.
Harvest: end August– beginning September, storage till March.
Brix°: 12-14, acids 0.5%, polyphenols 100 mg $100g^{-1}$, juice outcome 60%

SINAP ORLOVSKY

Origin: Russia, 1972
Cross: Severny Sinap x Pamyat Michuruna
A popular commercial cultivar
Dessert, processing
Harvest: end of September, ripens in November, stores till April-May
Brix°: 11-12, acids: 0.8%, polyphenols: 65-68 mg 100 g^{-1}, juice outcome 54%

DABINETT

Origin: United Kingdom, old variety, 1850
Cross: Chisel Jersey o.p.
Widely grown in Europe
Cider variety
Harvest: 1st half of October, ripens in November
Brix°: 14-16, acids: 0.2%, juice outcome 45%

Interreg Co-funded by the European Union
Estonia – Latvia
Baltic Cider

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OUR CIDERIES?

FRESH NEWS FROM SABILE CIDERY!

Sabiles Cider shop

Our refreshingly delicious Sabiles Cider shop has now opened at Riga's beloved Āgenskalna Market in Riga, Latvia! Here you can explore not only our own ciders but also selections from fellow cider makers. Enjoy cider tastings, pick up unique gifts, and discover the perfect pairings with the finest Latvian cheeses. **Come by – we're looking forward to seeing you!**

MEET THE MAKERS SHAPING ESTONIA'S CRAFT CIDER FUTURE!

Estonian Cidermakers

Estonian cideries Jaanihanso, Kloostrimetsa, Tori Siidritalu and Kodas talk about the principles that guide their work, from sustainable practices and circular thinking to the unique flavours that come from our microclimate.

EXPERIMENTAL PILOT CIDERS

Twenty apple juice samples from both countries were chemically analysed to compare varietal characteristics. Using these results, 10 cider makers in Latvia and Estonia, involved in the project, are now producing pilot ciders to understand how apple juices with specific attributes can help achieve desired qualities in cider. This work includes adjusting apple varieties or blend proportions, as well as testing production methods not previously used in their cideries. Examples include different barrel ageing, maceration, the use of ultrasound equipment for filtering to preserve colour and aroma, fermentation with hops, meadow flowers, and other ideas. The experimental process is being systematically documented by participating cider makers. We plan to present the process and results, along with tastings and stories, at the Cider Conference in November 2026. Stay tuned for more details if you're interested in attending.

STAY TUNED — SIGN UP FOR BALTIC CIDER NEWS TO RECEIVE THE LATEST UPDATES STRAIGHT TO YOUR INBOX!

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