

**NZ GROWER &  
ORCHARDIST**

**Cider Apples™**  
NEW ZEALAND



This winter, nursery stock is available for commercial planting for the first time.

*Tasting the award-winning Prosecco-style Āporo Secco at an Ahi restaurant pop-up in Shanghai*

## NEW APPLE VARIETIES DELIVER CIDER SUCCESS

**Simon Pearce's Cider Factorie is at a crossroads. The Tauranga cidery's new Gold Trophy Prosecco-style Āporo Secco and other fine ciders are getting noticed in key Asian export markets. But before Simon can grow his business, he has to be patient.**

"We're waiting on the apples," he says.

He's not waiting on just any apples for his cider, nor on traditional cider varieties. His award-winning ciders depend on the availability of new premium cider apple varieties developed for their acidity, tannins and flavour intensity.

"Until now, New Zealand hasn't had access to premium cider apples, so pushing for a premium product has been difficult. Now we actually have apples fit for purpose."

Hawke's Bay based Cider Apples NZ is marketing four new New Zealand origin IP varieties: PURE Blossom™ (PremA021), PURE Queen Bee™ (ABGS0708), PURE Blush™ (Red48) and PURE Solstice™ (AG8).

Harvests from trial plantings have been allocated to a handful of craft cideries in New Zealand making premium ciders. Marketers have used these limited runs to test the waters in key Asian markets.

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### **Outrageously good**

Premium cider is not well known in New Zealand, even among many drinks experts, says Yvonne Lorkin, wine expert and drinks editor at *Dish* magazine.

"You can definitely taste the difference. Fine cider is delicate, it's dry, there are layers of complexity. Fine cider with seafood is amazing. It is outstanding with Asian food - outrageously good."



*PURE Blush™ (Red48) is one of the new varieties behind the premium New Zealand ciders sparking excitement in Asia*



Cider maker Simon Pearce says the availability of fit-for-purpose cider apples makes it an exciting time for the industry

Consumers are more familiar with unchallenging basic sweet ciders made from eating apples. However, with global wine consumption declining, fine cider offers sophisticated consumers a fresh, light and exciting wine alternative with lower alcohol.

### Export markets beckon

Asia, particularly China and Japan, is an established market for traditional premium ciders from France and Britain. Cider consumption is growing, particularly among the younger generation.

Breaking into this market is achievable for New Zealand premium cider – in fact it could become a billion dollar export market within 15 years, according to an industry roadmap commissioned by Cider Apples NZ with support from the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Since the roadmap’s launch in 2024, progress is ahead of schedule, says John Powell from Cider Apples NZ. The new varieties developed with co-founder and breeder Allan White (known for Envy™, Jazz™, Dazzle™, Rockit™ and other IP varieties) are generating real excitement.

In November last year, ciders from Cider Factorie and Kapiti cidery Elemental featured at a Shanghai pop-up of chef Ben Bayly’s renowned Ahi restaurant. That was followed in December by blind and open tastings with Chinese drinks importers, retailers, buyers and other trade professionals.

“The feedback has been amazing,” Simon says. “It took everybody by surprise how enthusiastic the market is for these products. It really blew us all away.”

The market research confirmed that the ciders stand out for their “natural complexity”. The modern new apple varieties spark excitement and create a competitive edge against old world ciders.

“**You can definitely taste the difference. Fine cider is delicate, it’s dry, there are layers of complexity**”

The fresh, crisp and fruit-forward flavours and aromatics appeal to the Chinese market, and are magnified by the compelling story of purity, authenticity and prestige associated with New Zealand wine, mānuka honey and premium New Zealand eating apples.

While brand strategy will be crucial in a competitive market, “a lot of the story is already told,” Simon says. “It’s a very exciting time to be making cider.”

### Positive orchard economics

Grafting existing orchards over to new Cider Apples NZ varieties offers high potential for growers to quickly diversify future revenue. The roadmap provides realistic orchard profitability scenarios and growing programmes developed in collaboration with Fruition.

Combined with much lower labour and crop management costs (blemishes have little impact on cider apples), growers benefit from the potential for ‘single pick’ harvesting to further reduce expenses.



## GET STARTED WITH CIDER APPLES THIS WINTER!

Growers interested in planting premium cider apples this winter should contact Cider Apples NZ to learn more about the industry roadmap, China market reports and available nursery stock.

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