

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2025



New Zealand Cider Industry Eyes Billion-Dollar Future as Awards Highlight Premium Shift

The vision of a billion-dollar premium cider export industry took a major step forward at this year’s New Zealand Cider Awards, where a new ‘NZ Origin’ category celebrated ciders made exclusively from New Zealand-bred apple varieties.

The new category — introduced by the Fruit Wine and Cider Makers Association of New Zealand (FWCMANZ) at the 36th annual awards — showcased the progress outlined in Cider Apples New Zealand Limited’s 2024 Roadmap, which detailed how New Zealand can build a thriving premium cider export industry within 15 years.

Cider Apples New Zealand co-founders John Powell, cider maker and New Zealand’s only certified pommelier, and Allan White, a world-leading apple breeder, say the results signal a turning point for the sector.

“New Zealand has the breeding expertise, the orchard capability, and the export acumen to create a global cider renaissance,” says White.

“Growing premium apples and producing premium beverages for export is part of our DNA.”

The 2025 Awards’ new NZ Origin category drew high praise from judges for innovation and flavour quality.

“These new cider apple varieties — Pure Queen Bee (ABGS0708) Pure Blush (RED48), and Pure Blossom (PremA021)— show incredible textural depth and synergy. They could define a new era of New Zealand cider.” commented lead judge Merophy Hyslop.

NZ Origin Award Top Medals

Gold Medal and Trophy winner

- The Cider Factorie – Āporo Secco 2025 (Pure Blossom)

Judges called it “graceful, balanced, and beautifully textured”, with fine mousse, floral aromatics, and crisp minerality — a standout Prosecco-style cider.

Silver Medals

- Elemental Cider – Apple Blossom 2025 (Pure Blossom)

“Crisp, modern, and beautifully balanced.”

- Elemental Cider – Apple Blossom 2024 (Pure Blossom)

“Clean, refreshing, and delicately complex.”

- Tātau Tātau – Awa Premium Apple Cider 2025 (Pure Blossom & Pure Blush)

“Fresh, zesty, and textural.”

Simon Pearce of The Cider Factorie was thrilled to take out the gold medal in the new NZ Origin category.

“Our Āporo Secco 2025 (Pure Blossom) is an innovative take on Prosecco. It is turning out to be a hugely popular lower alcohol alternative to Prosecco. Perfect for the summer holiday season.”

“Cider today is where wine was in the early 1990s,” says Pearce. “New apple varieties are the key to creating exciting, world-class ciders that deliver a distinctive New Zealand style and global consumer appeal.”

Powell agrees that the shift to purpose-bred apples is central to premium growth.

“We need new varieties that offer balance, depth, and modern drinkability.”

Cider Apples New Zealand has already identified four new cider apple varieties through screening partnerships with Prevar and Plant & Food Research, and other apple breeders. These apples are available for planting in 2026.

The next phase of the roadmap is to prepare for global market testing. To prepare for export, pre-commercial cider trials were conducted at The Cider Factorie, Elemental Cider, and Peckham’s Cider. The small-batch trials will be evaluated in China, gathering consumer insights to refine flavour profiles for the Asian premium market.

“This research ensures consumer preferences directly influence our breeding programme,” says Powell. “The world drinks 2.5 billion litres of cider a year, and premium ciders are the fastest-growing segment where it is seen as a lower alcohol alternative to wine— particularly among younger drinkers.”

“Cider has a direct line of sight back to the orchard, the land, and its people,” says White. “That sense of place gives us an authentic provenance story and a sustainable pathway to premium global positioning.”

With new apple varieties, award-winning producers, and a clear export strategy, New Zealand is poised to lead a new global wave in premium cider.

ENDS

For imagery and interviews, contact:

Anna Colville-Smith, 027 594 3784, anna@acsmarketing.co.nz

About Cider Apples New Zealand Limited

Founded by Allan White (developer of Jazz™, Envy™, and Rockit™ apples) and John Powell (New Zealand's first certified pommelier), Cider Apples New Zealand is dedicated to developing new cider apple varieties and building a premium cider export industry for Aotearoa.

<https://ciderapplesnz.com/>

About the Fruit Wine & Cider Makers Association of New Zealand

The FWC MANZ represents all non-grape wine producers in New Zealand, promoting education, quality, and collaboration across the industry. Members range from high-volume operations to boutique craft producers.

<https://www.fwcma.org.nz/>