

Ep 92: Cider is Wine (Part 1) with Alistair Morrell



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just can not get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello to you all. And welcome back to a, interesting, different kind of episode because today, wait for it. We're not going to be talking about wine, but in fact cider, however, the good type of cider. Now don't switch off straight away, there are loads of comparisons between well made 100% fruit juice, cider and wine. So Alistair Morrell came to me after a long career, as a wine buyer in Booths and Asda. In fact, he discovered and was the first person to sell Yellow Tail in the supermarkets, but had a Eureka moment with a specific cider brand and then it all went from there. Now he came to me saying, listen, I want to show you these ciders and convince you that cider is wine. At first, my wine brain got in the way and said, no, absolutely not. I'm not interested. And then I started reading up on these specific ciders and Perrys, seeing the reviews, seeing wine critics and sommeliers that I trust, holding these ciders in much high regard. And then I just had to taste them and talk with him. So we are gonna be discussing cider making techniques and compare those to the winemaking techniques. Looking at vintages matter, like they do in wine. Pairing cider with food. The International Wine and Spirits Competition has in fact added in a new category where they are tasting these ciders as if they are wines. And you're gonna learn processes like the Keeling process. And oh my God, the value. I mean, I think this is the part that I'm most excited about. Oh, and the alcohol level being so low. So go with it, have your mind open and let's see if we can convince you that cider is wine.

Janina Doyle 00:02:38 Alistair, do you feel ready to convince me that cider is wine?

Alistair Morrell 00:02:45 Totally, absolutely. Totally comfortable to persuade you that cider might be considered as wine. Maybe we should put it like that.

Janina Doyle 00:02:55 Okay. Okay. Well, listen, it's not just me that you've got to convince it's everybody listening. So let's just dive straight in. You've had so many years working in the wine industry, tasting, selling, involved, making wine, everything, and then you've gone across to, I I'm gonna say cider a lot, but that's my default, cause I probably should say fruit wine. So just, you know, interchangeably go with it. So you kind of gone onto the cider world, like how did that happen?

Alistair Morrell 00:03:24 Uh, well it was a Eureka moment really.

Janina Doyle 00:03:28 Okay, we like moments like that.

Alistair Morrell 00:03:30 I I'd, uh, actually started doing some writing for a Cidery in the north of Sweden while studying for my MBA, a and um, uh, Andreas sent me some samples over and he was kind of chirping on in my ear that basically his process of making ciders was exactly like wine. And I thought, well, nah, that's not really true. Is it? Because when I did my wine exams, they said, you can only make wine from grapes. Not true. So, um, when I tasted these samples, I had to take a step back and reevaluate everything that I thought I once knew, These were so, um, well, uh, wine, like, and I, I thought, well, that's incredible. I've never tasted anything like that before. And of course, when you look into the definition of wine, um, you look at the Cambridge English dictionary or the Collins English dictionary, the definition of wine is an alcoholic drink made from any fruit or flower. So in actual fact...

Janina Doyle 00:04:32 Flower aswell?

Alistair Morrell 00:04:33 Flowers as in the blooming type.

Janina Doyle 00:04:37 Oh yes of course not corn flour.

Alistair Morrell 00:04:39 We are not into Bake off. No, even though there's yeast involved as well, but yeah, in actual fact we have a very Europeanized view of what wine is, um, very much channeled down the grape line, which I think was mostly corralled by the French. Um, but in actual fact, wine in a kind of wider landscape is very much about a fermented product from a fruit, from a flower. And indeed, if you go to China today, uh, and you ask for a, a glass of wine, you'll be asked, which fruit do you want your wine from?

Janina Doyle 00:05:12 Oh look at that for choice. Okay.

Alistair Morrell 00:05:14 Uh, uh, but you know, ultimately we are not trying to make cider into wine or wine into cider, but what we are trying to do is to persuade people that there's really good reasons to have another look at cider made from a hundred percent juice, not from concentrate, made according to, or close to the EU, uh, law. Because whilst there's an EU law for, for how do you make wine there isn't one for ciders and perrys. And you might say, well, we're not in the EU anymore. But the thing is that the EU makes 60% plus of the world's wine. And therefore they hold the whip hand when it comes to its definition. And it's really, it's largely upheld. Wine is made exclusively from grapes. Cider and perrys on the other hand, it's the wild west in terms of production values, and, and, you know, almost anything goes. So what we, cider is wine tries to do, uh, does in actual fact is assert a standard, a quality standard that is, uh, every producer, every product that we work with is made from a hundred percent fresh pressed juice, uh, not, not from concentrate. And that's a, that's a standard that we uphold, uh, as a business, uh, as a quality mark. Um, and, uh, uh, and for every product that we sell.

Janina Doyle 00:06:33 Do you think that is why most people wouldn't even consider that cider is wine, or it could be treated as wine, simply because there's so much cider in the market that is made from fruit concentrate?

Alistair Morrell 00:06:48 Well, look, I mean, ultimately cider has got a really bad name for itself, uh, and it is the bottom of the alcohol pile. When you look at the different categories and cider perception, you know, I know it myself, if I go and taste ciders with consumers, as we do many times, and we'd say, try this cider. Oh, no, thanks. Something I used to drink when I was 16 or I, yes, I had a bit too much of that when I went to the festival or, you know, you get this sort of, uh, commentary back. So it really is seen as, as, as the down and dirty drink. And what are saying is actually, uh, it doesn't have to be, um,

when you actually make it like wine, then, uh, you actually open up a whole new world of flavor and experience that is very similar to wine. It's just that the fruit is different. Um, and, uh, and that's what, uh, that's what I found as somebody in it's a real foodie. I love my food. I love my drink. Um, then to, to be able to explore this whole new world of, uh, of taste and flavor and food matching, uh, was just absolutely terrific. It's been a real eye open and continues to be.

Janina Doyle 00:07:56 Well, I'm definitely gonna touch on the food and wine pairings in a second, but as you well know, over these two episodes, I have six wines to get through and I'm gonna call them wines. I'm gonna assume you're gonna convince me and they're staring at me. Okay. So I want to have a go on the first one and have you maybe take me through how it's made and, you know, convince us right? Exactly. That is your job. So I've got the Able, and it says Methode Cider 2017. So this is a vintage cider. Um, does, does vintage matter?

Alistair Morrell 00:08:33 Absolutely vintage matters, uh, vintage matters, uh, in every walk of agriculture in actual fact. Vintage just means season. And each growing season is different. The climactic conditions are different. Uh, the environments are different and naturally, therefore, when you are producing a low intervention product like these, uh, um, then you're going to end up with a different outcome. And that's why vintage matters in grape wines of course, because, uh, uh, each season provides a different taste, a different angle because these are, as I said, low intervention products, they're, they're things that the fermentation actually controls the flavor, very much. We can only sort of manage as a human intervention from outside. Um, whereas with brewing and distilling the other two distinctive alcohol processes, manufacturing processes, they both require heat, whereas fermentation does not. Fermentation, the heat is within the fruit. And so it can't, uh, we can only control a certain amount of things within this, uh, within this process, it's a largely natural process. And so it is with Able. Able, uh, comes from apples and pears. And that's why we say wines from apples, pears and other fruits, because we see them as wines and to be appreciated like wine. So I hope you've got a nice wine glass there?

Janina Doyle 00:09:59 I, I do, I do, I have my Riedel glasses, I'm treating this like wine. And in fact, I just wanna point out to everyone cause they can't see, this is a really cute bottle. Uh you'll you'll see pictures on my Instagram. So everyone go there, but it's a 500 milliliter bottle and let's point out something here: 7% alcohol. So this is a perfect little size to drink by yourself, right?

Alistair Morrell 00:10:22 Yeah. Or, or share, I mean, I think...

Janina Doyle 00:10:26 Or share? Could do, if you feel like it, feeling generous.

Alistair Morrell 00:10:29 I, this is, this is one of the things that I find really, uh, intriguing and beautiful about, uh, these ciders and, and the Able method of cider is, is made like champagne, exactly like champagne. So they take the, they mill the fruit, apples and pears about 80% apples, 20% pears, that makes juice. Um, now when you mill the, uh, the apples and pears, you naturally mill the skins as well as, uh, the fruit itself. Whereas with grape wines, you might separate out, as you crush the grapes, the juice and the skins early on, with ciders typically, and perrys then, um, you include the, uh, skins to a certain degree.

Janina Doyle 00:11:13 And I'm getting tannin.

Alistair Morrell 00:11:15 Yes, exactly that.

Janina Doyle 00:11:16 I can taste quite a bit of tannin.

Alistair Morrell 00:11:18 Almost every cider and perry has some, some tannin. and so they take the juice, they ferment it into still wine. Uh, then they put it into bottle with a small dosage of the actual original juice unfermented juice because it's still high in fructose sugar, don't forget. Uh, and they, they then finish off the fermentation in the bottle. Now, uh, this one is, Able is not disgorged, ie. um, the result of a fermentation is a slight sediment in the, in the bottle and in champagne, they disgorge. And that's why you end up with a clear, bright liquid, however, with Able, it's not disgorged and the yeast lees are still within the bottle. And therefore you will end up with a slightly cloudy, uh, appearance.

Janina Doyle 00:12:06 Which I can. Yeah.

Alistair Morrell 00:12:06 But also wholesome, I would argue and adds to the, the aging complexity of it as it, as it does get old. Another thing to dispel any myths about, um, about these ciders, yes, they do age and they age very gracefully.

Janina Doyle 00:12:24 How long, how long exactly. Can you keep them?

Alistair Morrell 00:12:26 No, you can't. I mean, in, in much the same way as you couldn't with wine, you know, there are some wines, it will, will taste graceful and, and elegant after a hundred years and it'll depend on how they're stored as well. Of course.

Janina Doyle 00:12:39 So what about this one, um, knowing this kind of this producer, and it's a 2017, is it kind of like a wine in 10 years, time more kind of earthy, barnyardy characters will come through and the fruit will diminish. Is that kind of what would happen?

Alistair Morrell 00:12:57 I, the fruit will diminish, whether you'll get earthy and barnyardy flavors. I, I'm not so sure about that because these are, these are very cleanly made, new world style made, um, ciders, and, and, uh, and as such the fruit remains clean, uh, all the way through to the finish, you know, just like, uh, grapes, uh, when you're making grape wine, uh, a maker wants to start with good, clean, fresh fruit. Um, so I mean, the old idea that you're scrumping around for apples off the floor, that have fallen, it's not a great start because you end up with a load of muck and dirt and all the rest of it. So actually, you know, the best cidermakers are using really clean, uh, fruit. And, uh, they're starting off with a, a very pristine attitude and approach to the make. And that's exactly what, Mark and Sophie McGill come from winemaking backgrounds, they're parents are, Mark's father is a, a viticulturer, uh, Sophie's, uh, father, a winemaker in Marlborough. They're based in Nelson now, but, uh, which is of course just across the hills, but, um, they, they have the total understanding of what it is to be in the wine industry. Um, and now the cidermaking industry, because they make their ciders just like wine.

Janina Doyle 00:14:20 Lovely. So I didn't realize we'd gone all the way to New Zealand. It was just very ignorant to me. I was thinking, oh, I'm just drinking an English one, but no, of course. New Zealand has some pretty good apples.

Alistair Morrell 00:14:28 And this is Nelson. Uh, uh, you know, I worked in Nelson, uh, 30 years ago. I did a vintage in Nelson, uh, 30 years ago, uh, for grapes. Uh, uh, but in actual fact, one of the guys that I worked for there, he was there, uh, from Austria because of the apple and pear, uh, industry. So apples and pears have a, have a great, uh, place and historic place in, in Nelson, uh, north of the south island. Place of the longest amount of sunshine hours in New Zealand as well. And Mark shows the fruit off to

brilliant ability. I think what you'll notice about this is pears. I love pears, pears are extraordinary fruit. Pears have, they are the Pinot noir of this industry. Because they, they, they have, first of all, a surprisingly delicate, subtle fruit flavor. And yet, and especially in this Able, you'll notice that on the finish, the pear just powers through assertive and really they come through and that's, and that's pears for you. They look like sort of rather meek and mild, and you think they're not gonna make a difference. Beware. They do. There's just 20% in here. And yet it comes through above the apple, which I thinks extraordinary.

Janina Doyle 00:15:47 No, I think you're right. But actually, when we talk about pears, even just the flavor, pears can kind of almost give you this more aromatic, floral kind of flavors, whereas apple is tends to be ziggy or, or crunchy kind of, you know, whether I'm describing it well, but I have to say this is beautifully made because I think you used the word, you know, clean, crisp, these kind, this is a dry quite, it's quite focused, like a, like a, it's got this laser edge to it I feel. You this tiny bit of biscuity nature. And I get this kind of like spicy, I dunno if it's like spiced apple, or whether it's some like dried apricots or nectarine or something. So it's really interesting because I was scared that was gonna taste all these wines, oh sorry, ciders, perrys, fruit wines, whatever. I, I was scared, oh, I can't handle that. I dunno what word I'm supposed to use, but I was scared I was gonna taste all these beautiful liquid juices and, um, and go, oh, it tastes like apples. It tastes like apples. It tastes like apples. So I'm really pleased to tell everyone there's a bit of a spicyness, it, there's a little bit of, there's definitely this grip that there's some real tannin, you know, you can taste the, the skin in this wine, you get that kind of nice apple zing as I was mentioning. But yeah, I agree. You've got this soft fleshy nature coming out of the finish of the pear, so yeah, really, really nice. And there is a real structure to it. This, this is, you passed the test on the first one. I'm less scared now.

Alistair Morrell 00:17:19 So one of the things that I want to now stray into is food matching because you've described all the features here of a, uh, wine really from apples and pears that also contribute to why it's such an excellent food matcher, um, arguably better than grape wines. Tannin.

Janina Doyle 00:17:41 Ohhhhh. Okay. All right.

Alistair Morrell 00:17:43 Tannin, you know, as I've said, every one of these has tannin to some degree or other. Two, acidity. Typically these, these drinks have double the amount of acidity, um, that you'll find in a bottle of wine. Now people might say, okay, people might say, whoa, do do I want, do I want acidity? No, you absolutely do want acidity because it's the balancing feature and factor, it makes you want another glass. And three, there's always a certain amount of fructose, uh, sweetness left in the, in the drinks themselves. And that you've described as the fruitiness and the, and the different fruit flavors that you've got. Now bring these things together. And you've got a harmony that is absolutely superb for food matching, but food matching on a different level. So when we go to talking about Southeast Asian foods, you can really imagine these drinks going extremely well with Southeast Asian food, where we've got hot and sour, sweet and sour, chilies, you know, all of these aromatic spices going on, aromatic herbs. Uh, then you can imagine these going really, really well. And I know they stand up, stand alongside, stand with these flavors superbly like wine just cannot.

Janina Doyle 00:19:05 Okay. Well, now interesting. You you've said that actually, you had a really wonderful experience in Cowarth Park. You did this unique cider maker's dinner, so that's very forward and brave of them and amazing that they did that. And I imagine the fact that you've mentioned it was very successful. So what were you pairing? How did that go?

Alistair Morrell 00:19:23 So Cowarth Park was a, a, an absolute revelation. The head chef there, Adam Smith is completely passionate about, uh, ciders. And so they'd taken, uh, Brännland cider for, for a little while. So when we suggested that Andreas come and do a, a cider making dinner, they were delighted no more so than Adam himself. Bare in mind, this is a Michelin star restaurant. Has about 28 chefs, I think so, you know, Adam's a, a, a pretty full on guy, you know, he's very responsible. And for him to really pull all the stops out, it was really quite fantastic to have him do this menu. We did the five products, uh, from, uh, Brännland that, uh, they had at the time. We started off with just cider, which was, now no longer in existence, I'm afraid to say.

Janina Doyle 00:20:19 Oh. Tease us with that and then take it away.

Alistair Morrell 00:20:20 Yeah. Well, you know, that's the way that it goes sometimes isn't it, but that was Andreas's attempt to use, mold a British style cider as he called it. Obviously they're from Northern Sweden. So his impression of British cider was that it was sort of dry and crisp, but this was made like Moscato d'asti.

Janina Doyle 00:20:40 Okay. So sweetness, soft, lovely little fizz. Aromatics..

Alistair Morrell 00:20:45 Yeah. Slight bit of sweetness and that was the entry drink. And then Adam did a, a series of, uh, tasting dishes that, uh, that we had. Caviar tart with Cornish crab, yuzu and cucumber. Um, so I mean, you've got a lot going on in there already. And we were, we paired this with the Brännland Pearl, um, which is a complex drink. This was the first bottle that I tried that made me take a step back from, uh, the tasting table and say, wow, that is something special. And this is produced really out of the Ice cider production. Andreas' main production is Ice cider um, made, uh, from the frozen juice, frozen outside, naturally cold, uh, juice of apples, uh, which pressed in November, December, uh, and then brought in, uh, in March, April after being outside in minus 30, as it gets in, in Sweden, uh, in Västerbotten where they are. And the sweet juice comes off first, as it does with ice wine and that ferments into ice cider. And when you take, uh, when you, you get left with a rump of juice there, that is still delicious juice, but it doesn't achieve the sugar levels that are needed for ice cider. So Andreas made this into Brännland Pearl, and, and so it's got about 45 grams per liter of residual sugar, natural residual sugar, fructose, not additional Tate and lyle, nothing like that. It's, um, and a light, uh, very light spritz or natural fizz, which is waning a little bit now as it ages, but, uh, a really beautiful drink, really complex and, uh, and takes you beyond just apples, into tarts, into treacle, into more figgy type fruit and, and this sort of thing. And this is what, uh, partnered with both with the Caviar tart, uh, Cornish crab, yuzu, and cucumber. Absolutely delicious.

Janina Doyle 00:22:54 Amazing. Okay.

Alistair Morrell 00:22:55 Uh, we moved on to Sauteed duck liver, uh, apple cider and ginger with Brännland Claim. Claim is an ice cider, but produced with a lot lower sugar level than the traditional Ice cider.

Janina Doyle 00:23:11 Okay. I can see how the liver would go with that. And also even things like liver, foie gras, we're just taking it to the next step or pâté and stuff. I think a lot of these kind of ciders compare really well, so I can see how just the liver would work with that.

Alistair Morrell 00:23:22 And, and, and the thing that makes it work is the acidity. This acidity has just a cut through. That means that it matches with these. You know, duck livers really quite rich. It

matches with the food superbly. Then the Cowarth BLT, we reverted to Brännland Pearl, broad beans, lettuce, truffle, and marans egg. I mean, it was a sensational menu.

Janina Doyle 00:23:50 You make me hungry.

Alistair Morrell 00:23:51 Oh, it makes me hungry every time I look at this menu, cause these are all beautifully presented, really articulate and carefully designed dishes. And yet none of them are, uh, you could even approach the word big or even medium size, they are just arts of work on a plate in, in many senses.

Janina Doyle 00:24:15 I can imagine.

Alistair Morrell 00:24:16 Um, uh, then the Cornish turbot with artichoke, smoked tomato, buckwheat and lemon, and the turbot is, you know, the lobster of the flat fish world really, uh, and smoked tomato. That was unbelievable. And with it, you know, these, these flavors going on were just, uh, superb and by now we'd we actually moved on to the ice cider. And so we are pairing ice cider, which is 180 grams, uh, residual sugar.

Janina Doyle 00:24:48 With a fish, with turbot? No.

Alistair Morrell 00:24:50 With a fish. Yeah. And, and it was just sensational.

Janina Doyle 00:24:54 Wow. Okay. I'm shocked with that completely.

Alistair Morrell 00:24:57 Well, you know, I mean, that's the point about food matching is you've gotta be experimental. You've gotta push the boat out and do some really quite, quite different. And then the 60 day salt aged short rib beef, which was utter totally delicious.

Janina Doyle 00:25:14 Um, you couldn't have put that with an ice cider.

Alistair Morrell 00:25:17 No, we didn't but, you know, these were all Brännland ciders that we paired, uh, with them, and actually if you go to Spain in Asturias, which is, has a, has a whole culture around cider in, in that region of Northern Spain, um, and you get served a steak, um, then the typical drink to match with it is the local Asturian cider. So, you mustn't dismiss, uh, the notion of, you know, we, we have these very strong templates in our mind of beef, red wine, but actually, uh, when you push it out and you actually, you shut your eyes, uh, and, and you think about the taste profile of a, uh, a crisp and dry cider with, uh, a relatively high acidity. Uh, then you, you've got a fairly, very good match, um, with the beef and certainly with a bit of tannin as well. You have a very good match with the, uh, with the beef.

Janina Doyle 00:26:20 Well, now one thing I often say is if you, you know, terrible, imagine you've only got some champagne or, you know, English sparkling wine, and, and you've got a steak in front of you, you will cope. It will, the acidity will cut through that fat. So what I wanna do now is, I have a very interesting looking bottle in front of me that looks like it could be champagne or, or Cava. So this is the, the Guzman Riestra Cidra Brut Nature. So of course I would imagine just like with a normal sparkling wine, Nature means it's been fermented all the way to dryness and there's no added sugar. There's no nothing. Right?

Alistair Morrell 00:26:58 Thats absolutely, that's absolutely correct. And I hope you agree beautifully presented. I mean, it, for all the apples in the Southwest of England, then that could be a bottle of champagne by looks.

Janina Doyle 00:27:11 It does. Absolutely. I think, you know, if you wanted to treat somebody and they didn't like champagne or they, you know, you wanted to get them into cider, this would be a perfect way to, to sneak it in. Just is to point out everyone 8%, this is a normal size bottle at 750ml. But, you know, again, if you don't wanna share everyone, don't share, you know, low enough alcohol.

Alistair Morrell 00:27:31 Well, I mean, but low alcohol is a big...

Janina Doyle 00:27:33 I am joking.

Alistair Morrell 00:27:34 It's a big, it's a big thing, isn't it? I mean, um, today people wanna drink less but better and wine, you know, it took a bit of a hammering in the last few years about being too high in alcohol, you know, 14 and 15% alcohols coming over. Um, and, and yet there are really very few options between wine and beer. Um, but when you're talking about an average of seven and a half percent alcohol, these wine from apples, pears and other fruits are absolutely ideal. They are, uh, typically, uh, that sort of strength. Um, they hover around 7, 7.5% and you and I can sit down and share a bottle of 75 centiliters, um, at lunchtime at a different occasion, uh, a sunny afternoon, uh, a winter's day and still walk away from the table having drunk a 75 centiliters bottle very comfortably, very easily.

Janina Doyle 00:28:33 Which ideally is a good idea everybody. I, I have to say this is so different from the other one. So again, yay not everything tastes like apples. I'm so excited. This one, ironically has like almost even a little bit more tropical notes. So it's got, and even like a bit of a, a very, very minor hint of smokiness. Again, it's got apple vibes going on. Let's not forget theres... but I feel like the other one was a little bit spicy and more biscuity if you have, if, if you will, and then this one has, has maybe riper fruit. Maybe it's a little bit more aromatic and a bit more intense. Um, I actually prefer the first one, by the way, just, but I...

Alistair Morrell 00:29:16 Yeah well, I look, I mean, it's totally subjective and, uh, they're all individual, every one of them got their own story.

Janina Doyle 00:29:24 Yeah. You don't have a favorite child do you? No, no parents ever have a favorite child.

Alistair Morrell 00:29:28 Just like, just like wine. Uh, you know, we, we, we all say, well, I preferred that one to that one or that yeah, uh, absolutely totally allowed. And, and that's what, that's what the beauty of this, uh, uh, this, this world is, it's a whole new world of discovery to, to do. And, and the Guzman Riestra, the Guzman family been making ciders in the Asturias for over a hundred years.

Janina Doyle 00:29:52 Ah, so we are in Spain now. This is the classic place for those lovely apples. Okay. Asturias. Yes.

Alistair Morrell 00:29:59 Yeah, so Northern Spain, west of, uh, Satander, over towards Galicia and on the coast, uh, into the hills and, and then it stretches down to, to the coast on a, on the planes, uh, and, uh, really, uh, superb, uh, production here. I, I think it's a delightful, uh, drink and a crisp incisive, invigorating, um, lovely, yes, apples, but so much more, um, you know, for me, this goes to kind of more

exotic, as you said, you know? Maybe towards things like persimmon and, and that sort of thing, but I wonderfully balanced champagne alternative.

Janina Doyle 00:30:44 What are the price points for these two wines? Obviously, everyone keep in mind that 500ml is in the first bottle. And then the second one is a standard 75cl

Alistair Morrell 00:30:52 The Able methode, uh, cider from 2017, vintage is £16 and the Guzman, uh, Riestra Brut is £10.99

Janina Doyle 00:31:02 And of course this is a non vintage. Yeah. Cause I'm not seeing it. So again, a bit like what we would have with champagne or cava, um, they obviously, or am I lying? Is it a vintage and I can't see?

Alistair Morrell 00:31:15 No, no, no. I think they're a bit backwards in coming forwards with their marketing, really, because cider has been tainted with this brush, then cider producers often don't display the vintage when it might well be. And this is a case that it is. This is 2020 vintage. Um, and this won a IWSC silver medal, uh, last year in the first ever hundred percent juice, not from concentrate awards. Um, that's the International Wine and Spirit Competition, uh, which, uh, is one of the most famous competitions for wines and spirits across the world. Uh, been going for 50 years and we instigated, cider is wine instigated a, a new part of that competition around these wines.

Janina Doyle 00:31:57 Ah, you did that. Okay.

Alistair Morrell 00:31:59 So we did that.

Janina Doyle 00:31:59 Okay. So because the International Wine and Spirit Competition, they actually changed the rules, didn't they? And then they've added in cider and perrys, is that correct? Within their wine and spirits category? Okay. So...

Alistair Morrell 00:32:11 But only, only from a hundred percent juice, not from concentrate,

Janina Doyle 00:32:14 The real stuff, the real stuff. So tell me then what happened in the 2021 tasting, the first tasting that included these cider, perrys?

Alistair Morrell 00:32:24 So we had, uh, well over a hundred entries and, uh, and, and that was far more than we'd expected. So that was, uh, fantastic in its first year. And we, with the IWSC themselves, we brought together a panel of expert judges. Um, there was Laura Patre from the high end group...

Janina Doyle 00:32:43 Of course, sommelier, yes. Pollen.

Alistair Morrell 00:32:45 Yeah, that's right. The Pollen Group.

Janina Doyle 00:32:46 Pollen street social.

Alistair Morrell 00:32:48 Uh, Christine Parkinson from, uh...

Janina Doyle 00:32:51 She used to be Hakkasan. She was Hakkasan wasn't she?

Alistair Morrell 00:32:53 That's right. Yeah, she was the, uh, group somelier for Hakkasan with, you know, a number of restaurants across the world. And she was there for nearly 20 years. Now she's a consultant in a lot of low and no alcohol products, as well as maintaining a very strong connection into

the wine industry and wine consultancy. Fiona Beckett who writes of course weekly for the guardian and, uh, food and drink, uh, matching, uh, food and wine matching, particularly. Um, uh, and so that was, uh, fantastic. Simon Day who, uh, is, uh, both a cidermaker and a winemaker. Um, and, uh, very passionate about his cider as well is Simon. Comes from a, a line of, uh, winemakers. His father Robin Day was a founder of, uh, Three choirs vineyard.

Janina Doyle 00:33:47 Ah, okay, up in Gloucestershire. Isn't it? Gloucestershire, I think so.

Alistair Morrell 00:33:50 Yeah. And Simon was running around vines from yeah dot, as far as he was concerned. Uh, myself and then Adam Wells, who writes for cider review, Um, he was the editor until recently. So, uh, a, a really, a very strong, uh, knowledgeable group of people from the industry, um, judging these, uh, ciders, perrys and fruit wines blind. And, um, it was, uh, it to terrific, uh, terrific event. Uh, and we'll like, we'll be going again this year in the, uh, 2022. And we'll expect to be even bigger and better this year as well.

Janina Doyle 00:34:31 Exciting. Right. Well, you mentioned again, it's not just ciders, it's perry, so let me pour, this is the Templar's Choice Perry, and then naturally sparkling it says. This is 5.5% alcohol, everyone. This is a 750ml bottle. Um, so let's taste the pears. If it says it's a Perry, is it, does it have to be a hundred percent pear or can they throw in some apples as well?

Alistair Morrell 00:34:57 Is it only pear in the perry? Absolutely. Yes.

Janina Doyle 00:35:00 Okay. I'm saying that because I literally don't know. It's so funny. I'm so used to doing my wine podcast and now, right now I'm like, yeah, now I look stupid anyway, moving on, moving on. Just, you know, I'm sure other people don't know exactly what perry is. So is this made the same way? I mean, they say naturally sparkling.

Alistair Morrell 00:35:18 Ostensibly. Yes. However, we introduce a new word to you now. Keeving.

Janina Doyle 00:35:24 Oh, yes Keeving. I, well, I saw that when I was reading about some of your stuff, but yes. What the hell is Keeving?

Alistair Morrell 00:35:31 So Keeving is a unique process to cider and perry making and both this and the next cider, uh, that you're about to taste are Keeved. This is made by English couple Adam and Anne Bland in Normandy at Lisoires about a mile away from Camembert in Normandy.

Janina Doyle 00:35:49 But they're from Gloucestershire originally, aren't they?

Alistair Morrell 00:35:50 They're from Gloucestershire originally.

Janina Doyle 00:35:52 British couple. Good old British couple, reading the back.

Alistair Morrell 00:35:55 I mean, Adam, Adams made cider from the about the age of 14 and he got fed up with the lack of quality of cider making in the UK and wanted to find somewhere where he could actually make, make a difference with real cider. And so they moved out to France and bought Templar's Choices as a, as an estate. And, uh, and, and they make their ciders there. This is made from pear tree that is about a hundred years old. Um, and it it's, uh, keeved, as I said, which means that the juice, when they have the juice in a tank, it starts to form a layer of pectin on the surface of that juice. That layer of pectin starves the juice of the nutrients that it needs to feed the fermentation. And when the, uh, fermentation eventually stops, the resulting liquid has a lot deeper color, more golden, richer color, uh,

the nose is richer, more textured has, uh, more depth to it. You're not just tasting, uh, the fruit immediately from whence it's came. It, you are, you're tasting a lot broader. So instead of tasting pears, you're probably now tasting, uh, quince and, uh, limes and maybe citrusy flavors coming in.

Janina Doyle 00:37:11 There's a, yeah, there's actually, you, you know, you said quince, but I get a bit of like almost caramel and, and like a honeyed sweet note with it, but yeah, it is dry and there's this powerful grip on the pallet.

Alistair Morrell 00:37:24 And then on the, on the pallet, um, keeving will also allow, uh, leave a certain amount of natural sweetness on the, on the pallet, fructose, uh, sweetness. And that's exactly what, um, this, uh, Templar's Choice has. This is then subsequently fermented in the bottle. The fermentation is finished in the bottle, and that's what provides it with that slight fizz that you have there. Uh, I mean, again, I love this for the, uh, for its delicacy and subtlety, and yet, if you look at the finish, the finish just carries on and on. I, I, I love to pair this with sushi, um, lighter fish dishes, you know, flat fish, uh, plaice, uh, sole, uh, absolutely, uh, delicious with those sort of things. Equally good and surprisingly good with, uh, with things like goats, cheese as well.

Janina Doyle 00:38:18 I would wanna go with taking some and fish that's textural, nothing too light, but also smoked. I'd want it smoked or, you know, so it starts having that extra intensity just because there's that little bit of, not really sweet. It's not it's, it must be just towards, off dry, but it has that honey note, it's quite floral and it's weird, there's like a delicacy to it, but then there's a power definitely on the pallet, the, the power, the grip it's it's and it almost a little bit herbaceous. So now it's kind of, um, herbs mixing in with some beautiful fruits. Um, it's lovely. This might be my favorite.

Alistair Morrell 00:38:55 Yeah. And, and many before you as well. I mean, when we taste this, it goes down an absolute storm, another IWSC, uh, silver medal winner, uh, utterly, uh, delicious. I, I, it's a personal favorite. There's no doubt about it. Uh, and I just love this match of the subtlety lightness and, and yet, uh, and yet power at the same time. It's, uh, I find it utterly intriguing.

Janina Doyle 00:39:19 Absolutely. Now how much would this cost?

Alistair Morrell 00:39:21 So this costs you just £8.50.

Janina Doyle 00:39:25 No, that's amazing. If you go to cideriswine.co.uk you can get all of these ciders and perrys and yeah, this is going well so far, isn't it?

Janina Doyle 00:39:40 Now I know you guys are listening and not able to taste these ciders and perrys, but I'm hoping you are also slightly convinced as well. So stay tuned for part two next week. We'll be looking at the age of trees. Does that make a, a difference looking at ice cider in comparison to ice wine, I'll be tasting a cider made with Cabernet Franc grapes. We'll be looking at some of the key regions where you can find the best ciders, what yeast they use. Are they the same as the yeasts used in wine production and so much more. So make sure you too, in, in next week, and of course, to finish off, I have a quote for you, but of course this week, it is a cider quote. So I've gone across to Benjamin Franklin, the founding father of the US who wrote a lot about cider. He loved cider, and he told a story of a response given to a missionary, somebody from a native tribe who was listening to a tale about Adam and Eve. And they said:

"It is indeed bad to eat apples. It's better to turn them all into cider."

Well, after this podcast, I couldn't agree more. Thank you as always for listening to this episode, make sure you've subscribed. You've liked. And you've shared the podcast with your wine loving friends or cider friends. Do leave me a comment, do get in touch with me. What do you think of this episode? Have I gone too crazy? Is it too wacky or are you ready to embrace the cider revolution? Let me know. And I can't wait to see you again next week for another episode. Until then, cheers to you.