

Apple of Our Eye

Local cider producers press on...

Bad Seed

Highland

Where does a name like Bad Seed come from? "My buddy's wife came up with it, and we ran with it," says co-owner Devin Britton with a laugh. But there's nothing naughty about this two-year-old company, which turns out seven flavors, with two of the most popular being the new Bourbon Barrel and the traditional Belgian Abbey. To allow more flexibility, all of their varieties — other flavors include strawberry rhubarb and raspberry — are made with an approach that is very similar to creating a craft beer. They freeze the apples and hence can use them to make cider year-round. "That way we can pace ourselves out through the year, instead of making all our cider at once in the fall," explains Britton. The final haul this year came in at a little over 1,000 gallons, and the company is poised to produce 3,000 next year. Although the 22-ounce bottles of the original blend (750 ml for other flavors) currently can only be purchased in New York City, Britton is working to enlist Valley purveyors; plans to expand the cider production site to allow for tours and tastings are underway. www.facebook.com/Badseedcider/info

"Everyone wants the secret recipe, but I like taking the side streets and exploring the combinations and letting the apples talk and tell you what they're going to do." And with 60 varieties of apples growing on the orchard, the possibilities are endless. 845-758-6338; www.mporchards.com

Kettleborough

New Paltz

After graduating from Cornell in 2007, Tim Dressel returned to working full-time at the family farm. He had long been interested in wine-making, but finding himself surrounded by apples, he had a eureka moment — and turned to cider production instead. In September, Kettleborough released its first batch of "Brut Cider." "It's a different kind of cider," says Dressel. "It's very dry, it's like a dry apple Champagne." At eight percent, it also has a higher alcohol content than most ciders. "It's very crisp, refreshing," he adds. "It really pairs well with most foods." The cider is sold in 650-ml bottles at the farm and at several local retailers. Dressel expects the first 500-gallon batch to be sold out by the end of the year. "We'll be doubling our

production next year," he says. 845-453-2004; www.facebook.com/Kettleborough/info

Aaron Burr

Wurtsboro

Andy Brennan and wife Polly Gigosian, both visual artists, first planted 30 apple trees on their property in 2007 after picking up some "really, really good" bottles of cider in New Hampshire. Using apples from all around the region, they introduced three different ciders this year: Homestead Apple Cider (the only licensed cider sourced from wild, noncommercial apples); the dry Ginger Apple Cider; and Bourbon Barrel Cider. The ciders, sold in 750 and 375 ml bottles, can be found in more than a dozen local restaurants and retailers as well as several in New York City. And why is their product named after our third vice president, the man most famous for his duel with Alexander Hamilton? "Oh, there are several reasons," laughs Brennan. "But the easiest to explain is that he was the executor of this property when it was being sold back in 1817." Good enough for us. 845-468-5867; www.aaronburr cider.com

Naked Flock

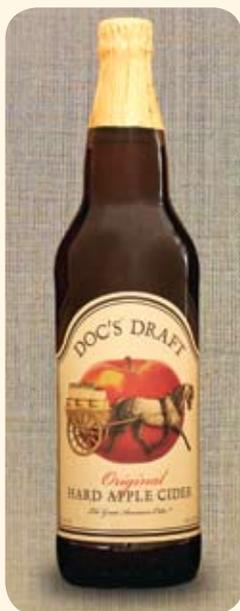
Warwick

Jonathan Hull has been quietly making cider at the Applewood Winery for 17 years. But this year, realizing that "cider is taking off," he decided to turn it into a bigger operation and launched three Naked Flock ciders. The "original" is fermented with Champagne and flavored with local honey; the draft is "fruity and tropical," says Hull, while the "outrageously popular" pumpkin is spiced with cloves. "We were making 1,000 bottles a weekend, and it was not enough," says Hull regarding the fall pumpkin production. The unusual name, according to Hull, comes from a true story in which *Moby-Dick* author Herman Melville brought a local pastor poppy seeds from the Orient. A flock of geese ate the seeds, fell into a drugged sleep, and were plucked clean by the local children (who thought they were dead). Sold "from Kingston to Montauk in 22-ounce bottles," the cider can also be found at the winery, which has a café and live music every weekend from March through November. 845-988-9292; www.applewoodwinery.com

Annandale

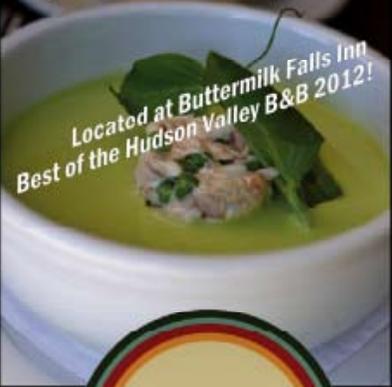
Red Hook

A cider brewer since 1999, Annandale Cidery — part of Montgomery Place Orchards — puts out the always-in-demand Annandale Atomic Cider. The blend is so popular that by the middle of the fall, all supplies of it had already sold out (at press time, you could still get your hands on some at Gigi Trattoria in Rhinebeck). Annandale churns out 1,500 to 2,000 gallons per year in a converted 19th-century barn and serves it in 16-ounce mason jars, "but we want to keep getting bigger," says owner Doug Fincke. What makes the drink so intriguing is that there is no set recipe. Each time, it is mixed with different types and amounts of apples. "Each batch is subtly different," explains Fincke.



What the doctor ordered Warwick Valley's Doc's Draft (left), and Breezy Hill Orchard's cider selection

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Doc's Draft Ciders

Warwick

The folks at Warwick Valley Winery & Distillery have been at the cider game for a long time — and their experience shows. The highly touted Doc's Draft Hard Apple Cider was first produced in 1995; today Doc's is the biggest cider producer in the state. (They made 100,000 gallons of cider this year, half of it was apple.) Numerous awards have been bestowed upon this fruity favorite, including some from this magazine. Other cider varieties include pear, raspberry, pumpkin, black currant, and for the first time, they're introducing Cranberry Spice Cider for this holiday season. Co-owner Jeremy Kidde welcomes all the new competi-

tion. "It helps to create awareness," he says. "It's great." The cider, served in 22-ounce bottles and kegs, can be found nationwide; the charming tasting room in Warwick is open year-round. 845-216-6900; www.wvwinery.com/cider

Hudson Valley Farmhouse

Staatsburg

Elizabeth Ryan's passion for hard cider predates this current craze. In fact, the longtime Breezy Hill Orchard farmer and fresh-foods advocate started a cider-making company with a colleague in 1996 that enjoyed some success before being torpedoed by 9-11. Their slogan back then was "returning New York to its rightful drink," and that is still Ryan's goal. This time

around she has produced "a beautiful, unfiltered fresh cider in the French tradition" that is now available in growlers at Whole Foods and local farmers' markets. (This style of cider has a shelf life of 2-4 weeks and must be refrigerated.) Ryan was lucky enough to study with award-winning cider makers in Normandy last fall as part of a Glynwood Center initiative, and she aims to open a European-style cidery in the near future. She is also anticipating that she will launch eight or 10 different ciders sometime next spring. "There is a lot of experimentation going on here in America," she says. "While we are not bound by tradition, we can certainly learn from it. It's really great." 845-266-3979; www.hudsonvalleycider.com

Open For Business



Waterside Wonder

Poughkeepsie is abuzz over its first waterfront eatery. Yes, there are other restaurants that overlook the Hudson, but the **Poughkeepsie Ice House** (pictured above) sits smack dab on the river walkway — just feet from the water's edge. (Located in a former ice house, the fortuitous location of the 100-seat establishment leads to fabulous views but also allowed for serious flooding during Hurricane Sandy.) With menus prepared by CIA grads, the restaurant is open daily for lunch and dinner. The Seafood Mac and Cheese has emerged as a crowd favorite; at lunch, there are 13 wraps and panini to choose from, including one called the Poughkeepsian. Why this grilled chicken and two-cheese concoction represents the Queen City we don't know, but we'll be stopping in to find out. *1 Main St., Poughkeepsie. 845-232-5783; www.poughkeepsieicehouse.com*

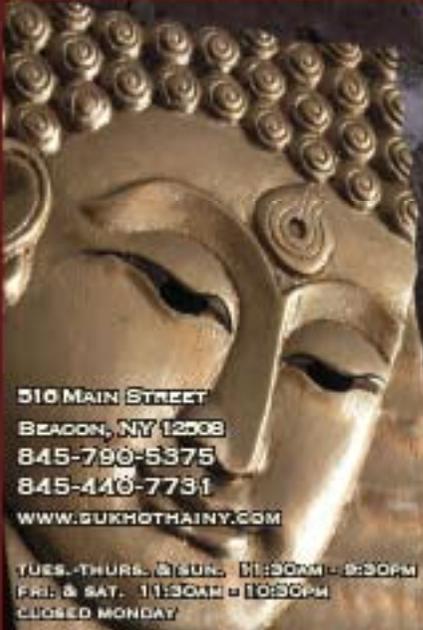
Rev Your Engines

When you think of the Orange County Choppers, the first thing that comes to mind is probably bulging, tattooed biceps and flashy bikes — but not food. Yet now motorcycles are teaming up with meals at the newly opened **OCC Café**. The snazzy, bike-inspired eatery (think Planet Hollywood meets motorcycle men) serves up an assortment of tough-guy dishes — like juicy steaks, big portions of ribs, and eight different varieties of burgers, as well as milk shakes and classic kids' favorites. You can also choose from more than 30 beers and many fancy cocktails at the sprawling bar, which sports several big-screen TVs. And yes, on Monday nights, one of those TVs may well be tuned to *American Chopper*. Who knows? You may bump into one of the Teutuls there in person. *14 Crossroads Ct., Newburgh. 845-245-3043; www.occacafe.com*

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