

Pommies cider naturally good

Written By KIRA WRONSKA DORWARD

Strange as it may seem, ten years ago there was only one cidery in Ontario. Nick Sutcliffe, who hails from Yorkshire where cider is ubiquitous, was used to drinking a lot of it.

He saw the hole in the market and also the potential, so finally he listened to his wife who told him to "Just shut up and do something about it," and founded Pommies right here in Caledon. Thus Pommies became the second brand of cider to occupy the shelf at our LCBOs, reviving a long forgotten Ontario tradition.

Historically, cider had been a hugely popular drink in Ontario. Most farms had apple trees specifically for cider. In fact, Ontario has the best apples in the world for making the drink, as the cold climate produces more acidity in the fruit, giving Ontario cider a better mouthfeel and well-rounded character.

It is, in Nick Sutcliffe's opinion, the most drinkable cider in the world, but suffered for years from an inferiority complex, unlike the ciders from Europe and the U.K.

Before the twentieth century, cider had been more popular than beer, but due to prohibition and an influx of German immigration, among other factors, beer replaced cider as the drink of choice.

Nick describes cider as more like a wine that's consumed like beer. If you draw a line down the middle of the Pommies cidery in Bolton, there is a winery on one side and a brewery on the other. The cider is made like wine in the one half, then carbonation and packaging take place in the other.

Pommies is committed to using only Ontario produce, apples, pears, grapes, and cranberries, to make their original and seasonal products. In addition to using only Ontario fruit, the cider is made from 100 percent juice with no artificial additives.

Developing their original cider recipe, the Sutcliffes wanted to create a balanced cider that was drinkable and approachable.

Staying one step ahead of the curve in the bow wave of the industry that has since sprung forth, Nick and his twelve employees have fun experimenting with wine and other juices. From these experiments were born Perry (pear cider), Sangria in the summer season (made from Niagara grapes), and the cranberry flavour available from Thanksgiving to March.

Pommies is a family business run by Nick and his wife, Lindsay, who consider it essential to be part of the Caledon community.

Their mantra is "Anything needing support or cider- we're there." Both the LCBOs in Bolton and on Airport Road, as well as the one on Broadway in Orangeville, are in the top ten stores in terms of sales. Pommies Cider Company, currently located at 25 Nixon Road in Bolton, hopes to open a destination cidery in Caledon in the next year and a half, part of an overall effort to help Caledon grow as a journey's end for everyone. "If you invest in the community," says Nick, "you get the total support of the community. And it's lovely!"