



# Pairing Food and Craft Cider with Scotto's Wine and Cider

By Martin Redmond, Lodi California Behind the Wines



Piggybacking on the burgeoning craft beer and foodie trends, hard cider has been the fastest growing adult beverage in U.S. over the last decade or so.

Scotto's Wine and Cider, which recently opened a tasting room in downtown Lodi, is poised to capitalize on the trend. And like many things involving this innovative Lodi based family company, their tasting room offers something unique - in addition to their award winning wines, they also pour their very own, craft ciders.

I recently had a chance to taste their ciders at a Scotto's Cider dinner held at Fish and Farm in San Francisco.

There, I met Paul Scotto, whose “day job” is Director of Winemaking for Scotto Cellars. He, along with his brother Michael, run the family’s Cider Brothers company. Michael, who told me he makes “wine by blood and cider by choice” is passionate about making refreshing, substantial ciders that pair well with a variety of food.

Their experience as 5th generation vintners enables them to take a winemakers approach to producing small batches of handcrafted hard apple ciders.

Just as with wine, true craft cider starts with quality fruit. Their ciders, sold under the William Tell and Pacific Coast brands, are crafted using five fresh apple varieties sourced from the Walla Walla Valley in the Washington state: Golden Russet, Granny Smith, Gala, Fuji and Red Delicious. What also makes their ciders unique and more compelling is the use of wine in some of their cider flavors.

Over the course of the evening we enjoyed five William Tell ciders – Bone Dry, Apple Pinot Grigio, Apple Wild Cherry, Blueberry Zin, and Apple Mango Muscat with variety of delectable food.

The Bone Dry was very dry and fresh with a yeasty, mixed green and golden delicious apple character. It paired well with both raw oyster appetizer and my entree of Pan Roasted Rock Cod with Zucchini, Tomato & Mango Sauce.

The Apple Pinot Grigio, made with 85% Hard Apple Cider, and 15% Pinot Grigio was my favorite. The wine adds complexity to the cider and enhances both the aromatics and mouthfeel of the cider. It’s very aromatic and lightly carbonated with a fresh, low-key yeast, candied apple, lime character with a hint of summer herbs character. Likewise, it paired well with oyster, crab cakes, and my entrée.

The Apple Wild Cherry, which was aged in a bit of French Oak is dry, lightly carbonated and fresh with a tart cherry apple, and baking spice character.

The Blueberry Zin cider, which includes 6% Zinfandel, is a pretty ruby color and lightly carbonated. It’s between dry and off-dry with an enchanting black cherry and spice character with an appealing hint of tannins.

The Apple Mango Muscat is a blend of apples, mango juice, and muscat wine. It was the sweetest of the ciders. It’s lightly effervescent with sweet mango and floral muscat aromas that lead to mostly ripe apple flavors with a hint of mango on the palate. Pair one served cold with some spicy treats on a hot day!

The ciders were a revelation. My previous experience with mass-produced hard ciders was that they were overly sweet and cloying. These ciders which ranged from dry to sweet were clean, refreshing, delicious, well-balanced and food-friendly. Have some, I know I will!

<http://www.visitlodi.com/blog/pairing-food-and-craft-cider-with-scottos-wine-and-cider/>