



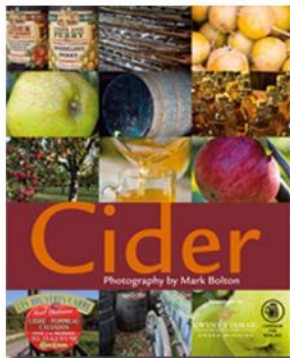
Pips from the Core - Cider & Perry News

CAMRA'S new publication 'Cider' dropped through the door recently. I've now had a chance to sit down with a glass of its namesake and read my way through it.



First impressions are good, the book is heavy on images, which of course makes it all the more important that the photography by **Mark Bolton** is up to scratch. It could be argued that the colourful world of traditional orchards, rustic ciderhouses, and the characters who populate them, have made the photographers job an easy one. As someone who's visited more than my fair share of orchards and cidemakers over the years, and photographed most of them, I can say with some conviction that capturing the essence of this ancient craft is harder than it looks. This is a very attractive book, ripe with bucolic images, and if the picture of rural life in the 21st century appears a little too idyllic in places, well that's because it often is in the world of cidemaking, go have a look for yourself!

Given the close publishing dates, this new book was always going to be judged against **James Crowland's** excellent new book 'Ciderland', and to be honest, as a cidemaker I didn't find it was in the same league. Anyone with a reasonable level of experience in the art of cidemaking, or cider drinking, will probably find 'Cider' a tiny bit lightweight. The subject is covered more widely than in 'Ciderland', with just about every aspect of our cider culture covered, but inevitably this all-encompassing format leads to a lack of depth in some areas. 'Ciderland' has a much sharper focus, and there is a great deal to be learned from its pages, particularly the snippets of cider lore which emerge from the various producers. If anything, 'Ciderland' is more of an enthusiasts book, and perhaps too heavy going for some, whereas 'Cider' is a very good all round introduction to the subject, and should be more popular for it.



For me, the chapters which work best in 'Cider' are those on **Cider Houses**, and the **CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year** winners, both of which feature some lovely images of what are in many cases, national treasures. The chapter on **Britain's Cider Regions** is good, and I also like the look of some of the **Cider Recipes**. Perhaps the highlight of the book for me though, is the **Cider Abroad** section, which has suggestions for finding quality cider and perry in **Spain, Germany, Austria, France** and even **Canada**. These chapters, written with great enthusiasm by **Dave Matthews** and **Alan Golding**, have the makings of a very interesting book on their own.

Of course, this book is not aimed at people like me; it's more an overview of a traditional drink which, thanks to **Magners**, and the **Over-Ice** fad, has become much more popular in recent years. Increasing sales at CAMRA cider bars, show

that many of the folk who have recently re-discovered cider are now trading up to the real stuff. The publishing of this book is therefore timely, since there are a growing number of people hungry for knowledge about Britain's most traditional of drinks. For the novice cider drinker, this is a very welcome addition to the somewhat limited range of books on real cider and traditional cidemaking currently available.

'Cider' (CAMRA Books, ISBN: 978-1-85249-259-5) can be purchased online from the CAMRA national website, priced £14.99 (£12.99 CAMRA members).

Mark Shirley



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