

# BALTIC CIDER

## news#3



[www.balticcider.com](http://www.balticcider.com)

May, 2026

From the shared fight for a cider definition in European legislation that protects authentic cider to showcasing the finest ciders at the world's leading trade events, this newsletter captures the dynamic life of the Baltic Cider community.

### DEFINITION OF CIDER: EU DRAFT POLICY AND JOINT EFFORTS TO PROTECT AUTHENTIC CIDER

The document "Revised Non-Paper for the Wine & Spirit GREX meeting of 27 March 2026", which addresses the definition of cider and the origin of raw materials, is currently under discussion in Latvia. The Latvian cider producers' community has shared their comments and proposals through the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture, contributing their expertise to ensure the definition reflects authentic cider production.

It is important to us that the definition distinguishes genuine apple cider made from naturally derived products from that produced using chemical ingredients.

Latvian cider makers call on their peers in the Nordic and Baltic countries to stand in a common position on cider definition policy, fighting for authentic cider of natural origin.

### MR PLŪME FROM LATVIA JUDGES AT THE 2026 INTERNATIONAL CIDER AWARDS IN THE UK



Māris Plūme of Mr. Plūme Cidery was among the judges at the International Cider Awards, held from 3–5 March this year in Manchester, UK. This biennial competition is chaired by the well-known Gabe Cook, the Ciderologist.

An award is a recognition by fellow professional cider makers that a cider is an outstanding commercial example of its style. All judges are currently practising cider makers from around the world. In Manchester, eight judges from Japan, New Zealand, the USA, the UK, Norway, Belgium and Latvia spent three consecutive days evaluating ciders across three categories and ten classes. Most awards went to the USA, Norway and the UK, but other countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Italy and Sweden were also recognised. International Cider Awards 2026 Medal Winners – Brewing Awards Māris Plūme says: "It was a great honour to be judging together with the most competent judges of the world and being one of them. Definitely learned something new too. Each drink received a lot of attention - the judging process wasn't rushed. Which is very good, sometimes some drinks really need a longer time to be understood well."



### FOUR FINNISH CIDERIES JOIN THE BALTIC CIDER COLLECTIVE

The Baltic Cider community continues to grow, welcoming new producers this spring and bringing the collective to 24 cider makers across the region.

Among them is Hallonmäen Siideripanimo, a family-run cidery in Perniö, Finland, where two brothers produce craft ciders from 100% freshly pressed apples sourced from local orchards and their own farm.

Vaski Cider & Distillery, which opened in 2024, brings together an award-winning cider maker, a Michelin-recognised sommelier and a visual artist.

Also joining is Pirula, an award-winning, family-owned producer continuing a local drinks-making tradition that dates back over a century.

Terissaari Oy is a small company based in Akaa. They produce ciders, juices, and lemonades from domestically grown organic ingredients.



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## CIDERCON 2026 - BALTIC STANDOUT MOMENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

From 2 to 5 February, CiderCon 2026 took place in Rhode Island, USA – the largest event in the cider industry, bringing together professionals from around the world. Baltic cider was showcased through two key activities:

### Baltic Cider Tasting Session, 5 February

The session welcomed over 100 attendees in a friendly, open, and supportive atmosphere. There was genuine curiosity, thoughtful questions, and a real appreciation for the developments in the Baltic cider scene. Asnate Ziemele, the driving force behind Baltic Cider, delivered a presentation highlighting current developments in the Baltic cider scene, including the first results of the terroir studies. Latvian cider makers Mārtiņš Knipšis (Pienjāni), Jānis Matvejs (Abuls Cidery), and Māris Plūme (Mr. Plūme Cidery) on the speakers' panel shared stories of tradition, apples, and experimentation. Tasting the ciders during the session brought these stories to life, and the kind words and encouragement from attendees were greatly appreciated.



### VISITOR FEEDBACK:

The panel was engaging, interesting, insightful and clearly passionate about the products that they produce. I wish them continued luck as they expand the cider culture of their nations.

Amazingly informative, great questions asked and answered, and delightful presenters!

This was such a fun lesson in what other people are doing in other parts of the world.

A huge amount of fun, humour and insight. Questions were taken through the presentation which gave greater context for everything. The best presentation of the show.

## 3RD BALTIC CIDER SALES MISSION TO AUSTRALIA, MAY 14-24

The team will be pouring and presenting their ciders at:

### PROMOTIONAL EVENTS IN SYDNEY – 14–19 May

- Estonian Australian Chamber event at UTS Startup Hub - 14 May
- Get-together and cider tasting at the Sydney Latvian House - 17 May at 2 pm
- Cider tasting and presentation at Barrelhouse Cellars (retail bottle shop) – 18 May at 4 pm (20 pers max.)
- Tap takeover evening with Baltic Cider at the Duke of Clarence Bar – 19 May at 4 pm

### PROMOTIONAL EVENTS IN BATLOW – 15–16 MAY

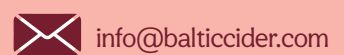
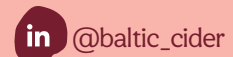
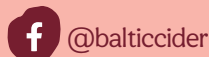
- Baltic Cider promotional evening for trade and media at The Apple Thief Bar at 6:00 pm – 15 May
- Batlow CiderFest 2026. Baltic ciders available for tasting and purchase, both bottled and on tap – 16 May

Baltic Cider will undertake its second promotional tour in Australia from 14 to 24 May, featuring a programme of industry and public events across Batlow, Sydney, and Melbourne.

### PROMOTIONAL EVENTS IN MELBOURNE – 21–24 MAY

- Pint of Origin Festival. Baltic ciders available on tap at Beermash Bar – 21–24 May
- Private industry showcase – Baltic Cider presentation at Drinks Education Centre – 21 May
- Presentation with Baltic cider producers for the industry at Beermash Bar – 22 May at 3:00 pm
- Public cider tasting and meet-up with Baltic cider team and cider makers at Beermash Bar – 22 May from 5:00 pm
- Get-together at the Estonian House Beer Hall event – 23 May
- Get-together and cider tasting at the Melbourne Latvian House – 23 May at 12:00 pm

## STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING BALTIC CIDER ON



More information: [www.balticcider.com/news](http://www.balticcider.com/news)

Sign up for events: [info@balticcider.com](mailto:info@balticcider.com)

"I was incredibly nervous – emotions I hadn't felt on stage for a long time. I honestly thought the audience wouldn't show up; it was late and cold outside. But they kept coming, filling the seats, with some even waiting outside for available spots. One attendee said this was their most anticipated CiderCon event, another mentioned being impressed by us and that they would try to start with cider. So many kind words..."

Asnāte Ziemele, Baltic Cider team

### Cider Share, 3 February

Baltic ciders by Abuls, Mr. Plūme, Lauskis, and Pienjāni were presented alongside ciders from around the world and met with great approval.



It was really cool to hear from cidemakers in such an emerging market and learn how they are navigating the introduction of cider to their communities. They were all really well prepared and the content was engaging and informative. Also, it's nice to be building international relationships at a time of a lot of international tension.



## CIDER FESTIVAL IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA - JUNE 6, 2026

The Baltic Cider Festival 2026, taking place in Vilnius, is the first specialized cider festival bringing together cider makers from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, as well as enthusiasts of this apple-scented drink. The event will provide an opportunity to explore, learn, and hear the most important and interesting insights directly from the producers. Each attendee will also receive a festival glass that never empties, allowing them to experience the perspective of cider makers from our region and invited guests from other countries on cider production.

### BALTIC-FINNISH CIDER MAKERS GATHER IN FINLAND TO SHARE AND TASTE 18 GREAT CIDERS

The Baltic Cider community gathered in southern Finland in early March, bringing cider makers from Latvia and Estonia together with their Finnish counterparts. 20 producers, along with the Baltic Cider project team, met for the first time in Salo, hosted by Emmie Brownie of Lepola Drinks. The group also visited Vaski Cider and were introduced to the products and stories behind Hallonmäen Cidery and Terissaari Oy through dedicated presentations and tasting. The gathering highlighted the value of peer-to-peer exchange. Producers noted that, despite operating in different markets, they face similar challenges and opportunities. Key topics included taxation, the status of authentic cider within the EU, and practical aspects of production. The gathering also discussed preparations for the export trip to Australia in May. The first cargo load is already on the move, and there are ciders from Pirula and Lepola, among others, on board from Finland.



Of course, I will join when the opportunity presents itself. I travel a lot around the world anyway, and we're going to look at this card. We sent 45 cases of apple cider to Australia, and we will start selling them in May.

Petri Rintala, Pirula

### THREE PILOT CIDERS ANALYSED FOR TERROIR MAPPING

Work is underway to develop the Baltic Cider terroir map – the first study of its kind in the region. Its aim is to better understand how growing conditions shape cider flavour across Estonia and Latvia.

The scientific partners - Polli Horticultural Research Centre in Estonia and the Institute of Horticulture in Latvia analysed fruit quality parameters (sugar, acid, tannin, and aromatic compound content), as well as the influence of growing conditions – including soil (minerals, pH, nutrients) and climate (including sunlight and humidity) – on cider quality in Auksis, Dabinett, and Sinap Orlovskij grown in both Estonia and Latvia.

All experimental ciders were produced by Abuls Cidery under identical methods. Apple juice was extracted using an enzyme preparation (pecto-enzyme), which helps break down the fruit structure and increases juice yield. Fermentation was carried out using a wine yeast suitable for sparkling wine production, including cider. All experimental cider samples were produced in the dry cider category.



#### FIRST RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

- 🍷 Aromatic compounds in juice  
Depending on the variety (often a blend), these compounds shape the cider's character and significantly influence the "apple aroma" perceived by humans:
  - Esters provide sweet, fruity notes;
  - Alcohols contribute both fruity and sometimes earthy nuances;
  - Aldehydes dominate in unripe (green) apples, giving fresh, grassy and slightly bitter aromas.
- 🍷 Acidity in juice  
A slightly greater difference was observed in the acidity of 'Auksis': juice from Latvia contained 7–7.5 g/L of malic acid, while the Estonian sample contained 7.7–8.7 g/L, reflecting the influence of a cooler growing climate.
- 🍷 Soluble solids in juice  
Before fermentation, the soluble solids content of the apple juices was measured. It was similar across all three varieties, regardless of whether the apples were grown in Latvia or Estonia: 'Auksis' (11.2–12.1 °Brix), 'Dabinett' (12.7–15.5 °Brix) and 'Sinap Orlovskij' (11.7–12.0 °Brix).
- 🍷 Yeast and aromatic compounds  
During fermentation, the added wine yeast consumes sugars and produces new aromatic compounds – higher alcohols and additional esters – which create typical cider notes of yeast, fruit, freshness and sometimes floral tones. It is also worth noting that secondary fermentation in the bottle or artificial carbonation with CO<sub>2</sub> helps to "open up" the aroma, as bubbles carry aromatic compounds to the nose.
- 🍷 Differences in the Estonian and Latvian 'Auksis'  
In 'Auksis' juice from Latvia, aldehydes (hexanal and 2-hexenal) were dominant. In contrast, the Estonian sample contained not only aldehydes but also other compounds (esters), such as hexyl acetate, which gives fruity and sweet aromas. This highlights the influence of growing location and conditions.

The analysis of the pilot ciders is ongoing and will be completed in May this year. The results will offer insights in how place, variety, and production methods combine to shape distinctive Baltic cider profiles.

## WHAT'S NEW ACROSS OUR CIDERIES? REGIONAL UPDATES: LATVIA, ESTONIA & FINLAND

### UPDATES FROM LATVIAN PRODUCERS

ABULS CIDERLY reports positive expectations for the upcoming cider season.



The apple trees have wintered well. Judging by the buds, it looks set to be a plentiful apple year. However, during the winter, hares and roe deer gnawed several young apple trees as the snow cover in Latvia reached 40–50 cm in rural areas. In forests, animals were often unable to reach food beneath the

snow and, in search of it, frequently came close to human dwellings, where they fed on the bark of young apple trees. People in rural areas could often watch roe deer in their unfenced gardens right from their windows.

HERBSTS CIDERLY was selected as one of eight winners in a project call under the TASTE Project, funded by the European Commission's Single Market Programme (SMP). The Latvian Country Tourism Association acted as the project partner responsible for administering the grant scheme in Latvia.



### Straight from Herbsts Cidery comes the story – WHEN CIDER GOES TOO FAR:

As part of the TASTE project – where we look for more sustainable ways to build drinks around tourism – we at Herbsts started noticing something in our own batches.

Sometimes cider just keeps going. Turns into vinegar. Not because something went wrong, but because that's what it does. For a while, it felt like a loss. But then we thought – maybe isn't.

So we started working with it instead. Apples, berries, herbs, vinegar. That's how Dārza Spritz came together. A sparkling drink that still feels like a garden, just without alcohol.

As part of this, we're hosting three Spritz Night events at Vējš Cafe – Vētra in Liepāja, where people can taste different spritz flavours and experience this idea in real life. Two have already taken place, and the third one is coming on April 24.

It's not really cider anymore. But it comes from the same place.

Who would have thought that spoiled cider could taste so good.

### UPDATES FROM ESTONIAN PRODUCERS

JAANIHANSO CIDERHOUSE

#### Highly rated by consumers

At the Untappd Community Awards, voted for by a passionate community of drinks enthusiasts worldwide, Jaanihanso received three Gold and two Silver medals.

- Gold – Sec Méthode Traditionnelle, Sweet Naturelle, Rheum Naturelle: Rhubarb & Apple
- Silver – Quince Naturel: Quince & Apple, Dry Naturel Cider

Untappd is a global social platform where consumers rate, review and share their favourite beers and ciders.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### 9TH ANNIVERSARY OF JAANIHANSO CIDERHOUSE – MAY 1ST

Celebrate with a relaxed afternoon of tastings, cake and a complimentary tour of the cidery and orchard. Doors open at 12:00, with the tour starting at 13:00.

#### 10TH TALLINN CRAFT BEER WEEKEND (TCBW) – MAY 29–30

Jaanihanso will bring a selection of traditional method ciders, ice cider and a special drink created exclusively for the occasion: a meeting of tropical pineapple and northern flowering quince, currently deepening in an oak barrel. Before bottling, a few surprises may still find their way in.

[www.tcbw.ee](http://www.tcbw.ee)



KODAS CIDERLY

#### Congratulations to Kodas!

They have been awarded Best Beverage from a Small Business in South Estonia 2026 for their Pommeau.

This elegant pommeau is crafted by blending juice from spiced apple varieties with spirit distilled from aromatic cider, creating a truly special drink.

## WHERE TO FIND BALTIC CIDER IN AUSTRALIA



A shipment of 24 Baltic Ciders from 9 producers will be available for short delivery times in Australia from online shop House of Drinks



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This activity is supported as part of an Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2021-2027 project “Exports of the Baltic and Finnish Craft Ciders to Australia”, co-funded by the European Union. This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of “Baltic Cider” and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.