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SUMMER 2012

# CityBites

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK



# 2012 SUMMER ESSENTIALS

A WINING AND DINING GUIDE FOR THE HUNGRY EXPLORER



**PLUS!** SAKE + BEER + BOOKS + RESTAURANTS + SALMON



# The Summer of Cider

THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF REALLY SWEET JUICE OUT THERE

You don't need to be a beverage genius to know that cider is more popular than ever this summer. Just look at the LCBO listings, all 28 of them, including the flavoured and iced varieties. Hell, even Beppi in *The Globe and Mail* has written about them!

Problem is, for someone like me who prefers his cider as dry as British wit, even 28 possibilities don't offer a whole lot of choice. Ontarians, it would seem on the basis of what's available, like their alcoholic apple juice fruity and sweet.

This conclusion I arrived at after partaking in a blind tasting of ten ciders, nine sold singly in tall boy cans and one bottled in six-packs. Once finished, I felt like I'd ingested more glucose and fructose and sugar than I had in the preceding six months combined.

that far behind. There is no ingredient list on the Seagram Cider can, just the declaration that it is made with "real Canadian apples," but it also has a significant sweetness, albeit in more of an unfermented apple juice-like character than the rest.

In the middle tier of sweetness were Strongbow ("fermented apple juice & glucose syrup, water, sugar") and Growers 1927 ("water, cider, glucose-fructose, apple concentrate"), along with the slightly drier and all-apple Blackthorn. The last, made from "English cider apples," according to the can, had almost a demi-sec sparkling wine character, which for me at least indicated a giant step in the right direction.

Two of my three favourites were devoid of a list of ingredients on their

notably sweet start, but is redeemed by a tangy, green apple finish that sweeps the sugar from the palate.

My personal favourite, however, was a cider entirely new to me, with an ingredient list that includes only "cider made from organic apples, carbon dioxide."

Called simply William, it hails from Québec and boasts an effervescence slightly higher than the rest, as well as a much drier character and a restrained, although undoubtedly pure, apple flavour. Finally, a cider I can keep in the fridge for when the mercury soars. **CB**



Quebec-made William Premium Cider is certified organic and lower in sugar than much of the competition. \$2.75/473 mL can.

For someone like me who prefers his cider as dry as British wit, even 28 possibilities at the LCBO don't offer a whole lot of choice.

Let's start with the sweetest offenders. With an ingredient list that includes sugar, apple juice concentrate and "flavour (apple)," Somersby was by far the most candied and cloying of the lot, while Keith's Original Cider ("cider, water, sucrose," among other ingredients) and Magners ("cider, sugar") weren't

labels, which I take to mean they are made from only apples. Dukes Cider from Tree Brewing in B.C. is still leaning to the sweet side by my standards, especially in its sugary nose, but I suspect would be plenty dry and refreshing for most Ontario drinkers. Ontario's own Thornbury, on the other hand, has a



STEPHEN BEAUMONT's *World Atlas of Beer* (co-authored with Tim Webb) will appear in bookstores this fall. He'll be anticipating its arrival all summer long on Twitter at @BeaumontDrinks.

## Rock n' roll your whiskey tonight.

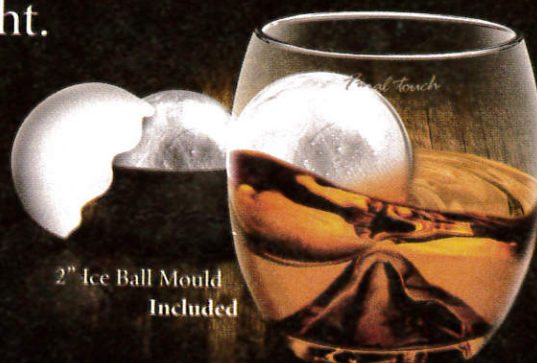
Traditionally scent, temperature, and taste were the keys to drinking scotch or whiskey. This glass brings two new elements, chilling & motion, to the tasting experience.



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