



Hogan's Cider launches classic Midlands drink at Game Fair!

Cider-maker Allen Hogan of Hogan's Cider began his mission to bring an appreciation of a distinctive and much neglected Midlands drink to a wider audience on Friday 23 July with the launch of his latest vintage Perry at the CLA Game Fair held at Ragley Hall, near Alcester in Warwickshire.

The artisan producer took advantage of the world's greatest countryside event on his doorstep to officially start his campaign with the assistance of officials from Alcester's historic Court Leet who added colour and a sense of theatre to the occasion.

Perry is fermented from the juice of perry pears and is traditionally a speciality of the Three Counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. For several hundred years until the early 20th century, perry making was one of the time-honoured arts of the West Midlands.

Not to be confused with its commercial cousin pear cider, true perry is made from carefully selected genuine perry pear varieties with picturesque sounding names like Huffcap, Mumblehead and Merrylegs.

Throughout its hey-day in the late 17th century Perry was highly valued throughout the country and finer specimens drunk by royalty. During Anglo Franco wars it was a popular substitute to wine when supplies ran dry and Napoleon referred to it as 'English Champagne'.

It is made in the same way as cider is from apples and like cider apples, perry pears are grown specifically for perry production. Due to a change in farming practises over the last hundred years there has been in significant decline in perry orchards with many varieties down to just a handful of known trees.

That Perry is now acquiring a fan base and making a successful comeback is good news for enthusiasts like Allen Hogan who is also Chairman of the Three Counties Cider and Perry Association. He believes that the future for perry orchards will only be safeguarded if the drink continues to gain in popularity. Mr Hogan said:

“Perry is a wonderful drink with a unique heritage that belongs to the Midlands region although is so uncommon most people probably don’t know of its existence. It is also so labour-intensive and time-consuming to produce that it tends to be made by a handful of craft producers like myself who make it because we love the end product!

“By creating a sustainable demand for the perry fruit, perry makers encourage growers to maintain their orchards and invest in new ones. It is vital that the decline in perry orchards is reversed and individual varieties are protected in order that future generations can continue to enjoy this quintessentially English drink that was once famed and prized throughout the country.

“I am delighted with our 2009 vintage produced from last year’s crop of 100 per cent fresh-pressed Midlands perry pears. Bright, lightly carbonated and pale gold in colour, it is a delicate and refreshing drink with a complex aroma of grassy, citrus and herbaceous notes.”

Hogan’s Vintage Perry 2009 abv 5.4% is available in 500ml bottles throughout Midlands Waitrose stores and at selected independent retail outlets, pubs and restaurants. For further details please call Allen Hogan on 01789 488433 or visit www.hoganscider.co.uk