



Serious about ciders

Common Cider's crisp brews also support efforts like Leaving No Trace, Black Rock City

BY NATALIE MARTINEZ

In the quiet hills of Auburn, a new contender in craft beverages has been brewing—only this time crisp, local apples and organic, all-natural fruit extracts are the stars of the show.

Common Cider Company started as the passion project of Fran Toves in 2012 when she entered a home brew competition in Reno against her son.

"It started off as a bet just for fun because her son is also passionate about craft brew," explained Toves' sister Vanessa Toves, who also works for Common Cider along with her wife Abbey. "Fran wanted to prove she could make a better cider, and managed to not only beat him, but also have three of her ciders place in the top 10."

That was the catalyst that sparked the creation of Common Cider, which is now building a tasting room that is planned to open in April with tours, samplings and foodie events.

With a background in food science and culinary arts, Fran

set out to change the way cider fans experience the beverage by experimenting with a plethora of flavors to accentuate the taste of locally sourced apples. Combinations such as Blackberry Sangria, Ginger Pear, Pineapple Guava and Blood Orange Tangerine offer a fresh change to the abundant sugary and dry ciders available throughout the region.

Plus, Common Cider's flavors are all gluten-free and have considerably less sugar than more popular brands such as Angry Orchard.

There is one variety that has locals searching, an extremely limited, one-batch only release per year: The Black Rock Apple Saison.

Inspired by Burning Man, and the important principle of Leaving No Trace, proceeds from the purchase of this crisp cider go to the nonprofit group Friends of Black Rock High Rock, which helps educate the citizens of Black Rock City about the importance of environmental preservation before,

during and after the annual week-long celebration.

Leaving No Trace is just as important outside the festival, with the number of attendees who pass through Reno and neighboring towns on the way to the desert. This is not limited to leftover trash. Leaks from vehicles, improper water dumping and chemicals that pollute the playa ecosystem are also some of the worst offenders. Friends of Black Rock High Rock is committed to preserving the natural landscape year round, not just during Burning Man.

"Our vision for this company is to transcend the idea of what a cider is supposed to be, and what a company should stand for," Abbey says. "Flavor is everything to Fran, as is cultivating the spirit of togetherness, and the common ground we all share being human." □

Visit Common Cider for its craft-made brews, 12852 Earhart Ave #106, Auburn; commoncider.com.

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