

Hard ciders making a resurgence in U.S.

By Kathryn Reed

Hard cider was a common drink pre-Prohibition. And while so many varieties of booze have recovered from those dry times, cider until just recently was hard to find in stores and bars.

That is changing.



A number of small distillers have cropped up across the country. Even the big guys – like Heineken, MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch InBev – have launched ciders.

According to research firm IBISWorld, in 2013 \$600 million worth of cider was produced in the United States. This is triple what sales were in 2007.

New to the Lake Tahoe market is 2 Towns Ciderhouse. The Corvallis, Ore., company is selling some of its varietals in El Dorado, Placer and Nevada counties – at stores and in bars.

Four of us sampled five of those Oregon ciders.

Made Marion was the overwhelming favorite. It is made with fresh-pressed Oregon marionberries and Northwest apples. It is one of the seasonal ciders; available May-September.

Sue said the marionberry complemented the bitterness of the apple.

Pam said this is definitely the one she would buy.

The sourness of the Rhubarbarian had all of us turning up our noses. 'Cot in the Act fell flat, as in it didn't really have any flavor.

The Bad Apple and Bright Cider are more traditional hard ciders. Bright Cider is definitely the sweetest of the five we tried.

Between these two distinct apple-flavored ciders it would come down to if you like it more sweet or not. I liked the Bright Cider a tiny bit better. The color is light, and with bubbles almost looks like a Prosecco.

Sue definitely would choose the sweet cider.

Tom thought if he had a whole bottle of Bad Apple it would have been like having three beers because of the alcohol content.

Imbibers might want to pay attention to the alcohol content. Most are in the 6 percent range, but the Bad Apple is at 10.5 percent. The Serious Scrump, which we did not taste, has an 11 percent alcohol content rate.

The colder they are served, the better the flavor.

2 Towns boasts of letting the essence of the natural flavors ferment and not adding flavorings.

One thing people with gluten issues will like is that hard ciders traditionally are gluten free. The same cannot be said of all beers.